

HALESOWEN CHRONICLE



Thursday, January 2, 2014

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Memorial to student is unveiled at high school

See Page 5



What's On

Entertainment and TV listings guide

Starts Page 27



Champion

Welborn wins his second boxing title

Sport – Page 40



Borough park ban on cycles is lifted

A BAN on cycling in Dudley's parks dating back 36 years will be lifted as part of plans to boost fitness and provide safe places for children to ride their bikes.

A council by-law currently prohibits cycling in any of the council's 18 parks and public open spaces in the borough. But bosses say they now want to permit cycling at all of the sites following a successful trial in five parks.

For 12 months cycling was allowed at the five Healthy Hub sites – Mary Stevens Park, Huntingtree Park, Silver Jubilee Park and Netherton Park and the Dell Stadium, Pensnett.

The ban was relaxed and signs denoting a Cyclists Code of Conduct were installed. There had been concerns about the potential risk to pedestrians.

But during the period to April 2012 no incidents relating to cycling were recorded in any of the parks and there have been no problems reported since then despite visitor numbers increasing.

Although under the 1977 by-law people could face prosecution for flouting the rule, the authority says it has never actively prohibited cycling in parks.

Environment boss Councillor Tracy Wood said parks provide better opportunities for young people to learn to cycle in a safe environment.

View deadline now extended

A DEADLINE for families to air their views over controversial changes to children's services in Dudley has been extended by council bosses.

Officials want to make £2.3 million savings but have dropped initial proposals to axe seven children's centres, though a shake-up is still likely.

Dudley Council has announced it is extending its consultation until January 10 to give families the chance to have a say at www.dudley.gov.uk

ZOO CELEBRATES A BUMPER YEAR

Great-gran delivers baby



Emily Stevens was delivered by great-grandmother Alma Parkes, seen with mum Claire, dad John and brother Harry

GREAT-GRANDMOTHER Alma Parkes knows all about childbirth, having had five babies of her own.

And the 82-year-old has an extra special bond with her family's latest addition after turning midwife to bring great-granddaughter Emily into the world – the second relative she has helped to deliver.

Mother-to-be Claire Stevens was at her grandmother Alma's Kinvor home when she started giving birth to Emily in the lounge. Great-gran took control. It was not the first time as she helped deliver her granddaughter Kelly 34 years ago.

Alma, who now has three great-grandchildren, said after her latest delivery: "It was a privilege. My family mean the world to me."

Claire and her husband John, from Albion Street in Wall Heath, said they were grateful.

"She was amazing. We don't know what we would have done without her," said Claire, who gave birth two days after her 29th birthday.

Claire was already a week overdue when she was getting ready to visit her grandmother's house.

She felt a slight pain while getting son Harry, aged three, ready at home

but dismissed it as nothing serious by the time Alma arrived to pick her up. That lunchtime the twinges returned.

She called John and told him he should come back from his work's Christmas lunch.

Minutes later they realised the baby was coming more quickly than they thought. That is when Alma took over while John called 999. "It was happening very quickly," said Alma.

"She gave another push and just as the paramedics came through the door the baby delivered."

Emily was born weighing 9lb 9oz on December 19.

AROUND 250,000 people poured through the doors at Dudley Zoo last year – making 2013 one of the attraction's most successful years to date.

Chief executive Peter Suddock has credited the zoo's continued efforts to develop the site and invest in facilities for the swell in visitor numbers.

And it's set to be a busy time for the venue in 2014 with several new exhibits opening, as well as other improvements.

Mr Suddock said: "The investment and changes have enhanced our visitor experience and, alongside celebrating the successes of the past 12 months, we have some very interesting plans rolling out across the site."

Achievement

"We have grown visitor numbers by an amazing 100,000 in just eight years, which is an incredible achievement in today's economic climate, and this year we reached the quarter of a million mark – that's 250,000 visitors through the gates."

Figures released earlier in the year, showed the zoo welcomed 120,000 people through the gates between January and the end of July this year, compared with 103,000 during the same period last year.

Recent boosts to the animal collection and the creation of bespoke enclosures for some of the world's rarest species, including Gelada Baboons on the Bank, are proving popular.

Mr Suddock said: "Primate numbers are up, as are bird species, and we're very proud of new Sumatran male tiger, Joao, a mate for our beautiful female, Daseep."



Zoo boss Peter Suddock

"She is one of the most important big cats in the world and it is vital her bloodline continues."

Work on the iconic wave entrance and Safari shop is expected to be completed by Easter when the restoration of the bear ravine and kiosk will begin.

The £1.15m project, which also included repairing and reopening the chairlift last year, is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Further work will see the zoo invest £600,000 on a retail complex, Tecton interpretation centre and the upgrading of the toilets and food outlets.

■ Zoo being restored to former glory – see page 17

Threat to demolish landmark is revived

COUNCIL bosses saying campaigners aiming to save the former Dudley Hippodrome theatre lack any 'sensible' plans for it to be saved.

Plans to demolish the landmark venue are going back before the planning committee. The apparent death knell comes after the old theatre on Castle Hill marked its 75th anniversary.

Regeneration boss Councillor Judy Foster halted campaigners' plans to re-enter the building to gather details on work needed, citing safety concerns. Those fighting to save the building called the refusal a 'deliberate ploy' to bring down their campaign and branded dismissal of their proposals as 'nonsense'.

The group drew up a plan to save the former bingo hall but an independent assessment ordered by the council found the plan 'unviable'.

Councillor Foster said: "The proposal from the friends group was assessed independently and the outcome was clear in terms of it not being a viable option, which is why the council will not be considering the proposal any further. We have always made it clear that sensible proposals for the building would be considered. In the absence of such a proposal the council will continue to explore the option of demolition."

■ Memory Lane – page 10

Hard decisions will be made

COUNCIL bosses have warned tough decisions are needed to save £2.3 million after promising to keep children's centres open.

An outcry from families forced Dudley Council to back down on plans to axe seven children's centres.

But council leader Councillor David Sparks says the savings still need to be met, warning the authority was considering a number of ways to make necessary cuts.

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Welfare cuts killed my brother – claim

A HEARTBROKEN sister has blamed welfare chiefs for her partially-sighted brother's death after he killed himself amid money worries.

Tim Salter, a former sales manager, was left 'destitute' when he was declared fit to work and had his benefits axed. The 53-year-old was found hanged at his home in Meddins Lane, Kinver, two days before he was due to be evicted over rent arrears.

He had fallen behind on payments after the Government cut his state benefits under its controversial 'fit to work' scheme.

Relatives discovered Mr Salter's dire financial straits after his death, when they found a housing association repossession order in the bin.

His grieving sister Linda Cooksey, aged 60, of

Chandler Avenue, Kinver, hit out at welfare chiefs, saying they had pushed Mr Salter 'over the edge'.

Her brother had been registered partially blind since 1994 after a drug overdose left his sight damaged. She believes he would still be alive if he had not been deemed fit to work.

Mrs Cooksey, who found her brother hanging in the hallway, said: "It just sent him over the edge. He must have felt so worthless and that life wasn't worth living. He didn't want to be a burden on anyone. I think he'd just got that depressed and down he was just ignoring everything after being told he was fit for work."

She added: "I totally believe he'd still be alive now if they hadn't stopped his money."

An inquest heard a letter dated September 17 gave Mr Salter 10 days to leave his home. Mr Salter, who suffered from agoraphobia, hanged himself eight days later.

A spokesman for South Staffordshire Housing Association, said: "We work very hard to avoid getting to the stage of seeking possession of any of our properties by calling, visiting and writing to customers who we believe are struggling with their finances to offer them advice and support. Offers were made to Mr Salter on a number of occasions between July and September."

South Staffordshire coroner Andrew Haigh ruled the drop in income contributed to Mr Salter's death. Mr Salter's family have now written to the Prime Minister.

Mistaken identity led to death of young father

HE WAS fleeing for his life in a bid to get away from a hammer-wield- ing attacker when he ran into path of a 38-ton truck and died.

Sartaj Aziz, of Stourbridge, was a victim of mistaken identity after he was wrongly thought to have threatened a teenager with a machete.

New bid to fund play area

A £200,000 plan to transform an area of barren land near a football club ground into a children's play area and community garden has been revealed.

Residents want to form a community group to press for lottery funding to get the scheme in Cradley off the ground.

Original plans to gain £50,000 towards the project from the National Lottery's Peoples Millions scheme were shelved after an unsuccessful application. But now campaigners have drawn up proposals in a bid to secure cash for the location known as 'The Barn Area'.

Officials from Dudley Council have already agreed to consider giving the group a share of money from 'section 106' funds. This is cash paid by developers for improvements in nearby communities.

But campaigners will also make a fresh application to the National Lottery for cash to transform the land off Beeches View Avenue, near to Cradley Town football club. Ward Councillor Ken Turner says the scheme would also be supplemented with cash from the People Millions scheme.

He was chased to his death by Garret Fitzpatrick, who was jailed for five years for the manslaughter of the 26-year-old father of two.

Wolverhampton Crown Court was told Fitzpatrick arrived at Formula 1 Hand Car Wash in Thorns Road, Quarry Bank, on August 20 after being told Mr Aziz, a regular at the business, had attacked a teenager.

Rage

Miss Joanne Barker, prosecuting, said the threats had been made by a man named Nigel and that Fitzpatrick had been misinformed.

She said Mr Aziz, of Prescott Road, Stourbridge, often went to the car wash as his friend lived next door. An argument had taken place between Mr Aziz and the unnamed teenager but that he had not brandished a weapon, she said.

Fitzpatrick, aged 27, was told Mr Aziz had produced the knife and went to find him in a rage although carried his partner and four children in his pick-up truck.

"The defendant drove to the car wash in his Ford Ranger," said Miss Barker.

"He saw Mr Aziz, who was sat in the back of his friend's Peugeot, and shouted at him to 'get out of the car'."

"He ran up and was saying he was going to kill Mr Aziz. He was carrying a hammer."

"Mr Aziz was so frightened he got out of the passenger side door and fled."

Miss Barker said witnesses described Mr Aziz as

Report by Adam Thompson

looking 'terrorised' and that he was running 'hell for leather' to escape Fitzpatrick, who was holding the weapon above his head.

"He ran towards Thorns Road," said Miss Barker. "He emerged from the wrong side of conifers that would block the view of any traffic."

"Mr Aziz wasn't able to see a 38-ton lorry and in his panic he ran into its path and was killed."

She added that Fitzpatrick had also been very close to being hit by the lorry but had stopped in time.

After seeing Mr Aziz hit by the lorry, the attacker returned to his vehicle and drove away. He later hid the hammer and disposed of his clothes but two days later was arrested.

Miss Sarah Buckingham, defending, said Fitzpatrick, of Brierley Hill, had been 'wracked with guilt'.

"He has written a letter to the family expressing his remorse and feelings of guilt," she said. "Mr Fitzpatrick is not bad a person. He is industrious and hard-working and wanted to provide for his family."

Fitzpatrick, of Bank Street, pleaded guilty in November to manslaughter.

Judge John Warner said as he sentenced Fitzpatrick on December 18: "The charge was manslaughter and there was no intention to kill. But it remains the fact a life was lost as a result of your actions."

Detective Inspector Warren Hines of West Mid-



Forensics experts at the scene of the tragedy in Thorns Road



Hit by lorry – Sartaj Aziz



Jailed – Garret Fitzpatrick

lands Police, speaking after the hearing, said: "This was a terrible incident which had catastrophic consequences for the victim Sartaj Aziz and those unfortunate enough to witness events as they unfolded. I hope that the early guilty plea entered by Fitzpatrick and today's sen-

tence will provide some small comfort to Sartaj's family and they are able to begin the slow process of moving on.

"That a young man with everything that life holds ahead of him has been killed as a result of a disagreement is truly tragic."

College gets 95 in work at store

A COLLEGE'S Skills Shop stepped in to recruit almost 100 staff, taking them off the dole to work at a home, leisure and garden superstore's major new branch.

Birmingham Metropolitan College, which this year merged with Stourbridge College, helped to identify unemployed people who could work at The Range at the Merry Hill Centre, which opened in September.

Candidates

The college's Black Country Skills Shop, based at Merry Hill, worked with Jobcentre Plus to sift through 300 candidates that were referred.

Experts from the Skills Shop then interviewed them and steered them through training courses.

The opening of The Range created a total of 150 new jobs, with the Skills Shop filling almost two thirds.

Emma Davies, the store's office manager, said: "The Black Country Skills Shop, along with Jobcentre Plus, really pulled out all the stops in our recruitment drive and, to date, we've taken on 95 members of staff."

Council lose £15m worth of grant aid

DUDLEY Council will be stripped of almost £15 million in government grants.

Bosses are set to receive £136.9m in 2014/15, down from £151.7m for this financial year – a reduction of £14.8m.

The figures confirm warnings made to council leaders about reduced funding. The council is currently carrying out consultation as it looks to make £57.8m of savings by 2017.

Council leader David Sparks said they would be the "biggest cutbacks in our history." But he added: "It's frequently the case that pre-Christmas figures are altered in the light of detailed negotiations."

Sandwell Councillor Steve Eling said he believed the confirmed figures would leave his authority £200,000 worse off than predicted.

"It's not going to make or break the budget," he said. "But we have very little room for manoeuvre."

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Folk rally to the aid of family hit by fire

WHEN a devastating fire started by a dishwasher tore through their Wall Heath home, the Wood family lost almost everything.

Most of their belongings were destroyed by flames or ruined by smoke and they were forced to move into a hotel.

The blaze gutted their semi-detached house and now there will be months of re-plastering, decorating and re-plumbing before they can go back home.

But despite the family of six's ordeal, they have been bowled over by the generosity of both friends and people they had never met.

They have received donations of clothes, toys and other items to help them get back on their feet.

In the run up to Christmas a special grotto was set up in their honour to raise much-needed cash. Bathroom firm Changing Rooms in Upper Gornal was given a festive makeover and youngsters were able to visit Santa.

More than £250 has so far been raised for the family and mother-of-four Jo Wood, 41, who is married to Mike, 45, said she was 'very grateful'.

"Everybody has been brilliant. It's been fantastic how generous people have been."

Son has quit Tory group

THE son of two councillors, who quit the Conservative Party last month amid accusations of bullying, has also resigned from the group.

Former cabinet member and councillor Adrian Turner blamed bad blood within the Dudley Conservative Party, which recently saw his parents Councillors Ken and Hazel Turner leave, as part of the reason for his departure.

Mr Turner joined the Conservative Party in 1997 and represented Lye and Wollescote from 2004 until 2012. He said he had been forced to leave the party as issues were affecting his 'health and happiness'.

He added: "Due to recent events and the continued victimisation that has been experienced by myself and family, I have no alternative than to resign. I became a member of the party believing it was a party of opportunity for all. I have since realised that it is merely an illusion."

Hollywood bringing author's book to life



Author Steve Watson

IT HAS been four years since Steve Watson wrote the novel that changed his life and now the release of the Hollywood film adaptation is approaching. The Stourbridge-born author has sold more than 350,000 copies of Before I go to Sleep in 32 countries.

The finishing touches are being put to the film starring Hollywood A-listers Nicole Kidman and Colin Firth ready for release in the summer. Kidman will play Christine Lucas, who wakes up to find she does not recognise her life, while Firth will play her husband Ben.

Mr Watson a former pupil at The Wordsley School and King Edward VI Sixth Form College in Stourbridge, is looking forward to seeing

the film released. He said: "It's so exciting. It was amazing to see Nicole Kidman acting out scenes that I had written."

Mr Watson spent a number of days on set in London and said watching filming was like 'seeing my imagination brought to life'.

Mr Watson said: "I went to see filming a few times - it was great, and a very moving experience, but quite surreal. Although the interiors and the settings aren't exactly as I imagined them, the spirit of the book is there."

The rights were snapped up by producer Ridley Scott, who has drafted in Hollywood stars Kidman and Firth to play the lead roles. It is being scripted and directed by Rowan Joffé.

Mr Watson, 41, said Kidman had 'really got inside the character'. He added: "Seeing the two stars expressing the emotions took me back to writing those scenes." Kidman told him Christine was a 'great character', which made him realise how much his life has changed since he wrote the book while working as an audiology specialist in London. He is now working on his follow-up.

He said: "I wrote my first book in a bit of a bubble, thinking that if I was lucky maybe an agent might read it. Now the bar has been raised. It's hard not to start trying to second guess what readers want, but that way madness lies. I'm working hard not to fall into that trap," he added.

Rubbish mountain lands businessman behind bars

IT HAS been a battle that has rumbled on for four years. But now a businessman who failed to clear a towering pile of rubbish has spent Christmas behind bars and will be pursued for assets to pay for the clearance costs.

Robert McNaughton will have his accounts and property examined as the Environment Agency looks to seize any of his remaining assets to contribute to the £750,000 maximum bill for clearing the huge amount of waste from the Refuse Derived Fuel Ltd in Moor Street in Brierley Hill.

by Alex Ross

Sentence

After receiving a six-month sentence for contempt from Mr Justice MacDuff at Birmingham High Court, McNaughton told the judge: "I have no assets, I have spent every penny."

But the agency has outlined it that it will apply to seize McNaughton's assets.

David Hudson, the agency's environment manager, said: "This is not finished from our point of view - we want the site cleared."

"The public should not pay for this mess which has been created by McNaughton and his company - they should pay for it."

"The law requires them to manage within their permit conditions and they have not done that and it would be a bad precedent to set if we began clearing up other people's" sites at public expense."

He said: "It's hard to have sympathy with someone that has been given so many opportunities to do the right thing."

"Our files show numerous occasions where we have offered him a constructive

way forward to bring about reduction in waste in reasonable time scales and he has never taken steps to comply with that."

He added: "We have been very grateful of the support from local residents for the action we have taken and we have spent a lot of time speaking to residents and writing to explain what is happening."

"We do understand they will be frustrated and would like this to be solved quickly. I cannot offer that at the moment because the process is still ongoing."

McNaughton had taken over the site in 2009 from its previous operators but soon residents began complaining about the site.

Environment Agency officials started to take enforcement action over the plant over concerns the waste pile was over permitted limits.

But it was not until 2012 that the organisation brought High Court action against the firm.

The High Court ordered all waste to be cleared by March this year, but that was a deadline that was missed.

One last chance was given as McNaughton was found in contempt of court for breaching the High Court orders in June. But this month he admitted defeat, claiming: "I have tried my utmost."



The massive mound of rubbish at the site in Moor Street, Brierley Hill, which towers above the buildings nearby



Jailed for contempt of court - Robert McNaughton



View of the rubbish towering over the homes at Brierley Hill

NEWS

in brief

Fairtrade status at primary school

A PRIMARY school is celebrating the culmination of two years of hard work following the recent achievement of Fairtrade School status.

Staff, pupils and governors from Oldswinford Primary School have been presented with a certificate. The school had to complete five goals which show a commitment to Fairtrade, including setting up a steering group, adopting a policy and committing to using products in cookery classes and uniform options.

It's not too late to get the flu jab

RESIDENTS eligible for a free NHS flu jab are being reminded that it is not too late to be vaccinated.

The winter flu jab is offered to people in 'at risk' groups. These include everyone aged 65 and over, children and adults under 65 with certain medical conditions and all pregnant women.

This year a free nasal spray vaccine is being offered to parents of healthy two and three year olds, so that their children can be protected against the virus.

Store £750 boost for street pastors

A STREET pastor scheme has been awarded £750 by supermarket bosses.

It is one of several groups to receive donations from the Tesco Extra store which opened in Stourbridge in October.

Store manager Sadie Griffiths welcomed volunteers from the Street Pastor team to the store to receive the cheque.

Exercise session for those over 50

AGE UK Dudley will be running an extra exercise session as part of its Leap Over 50 programme.

Tutor Deb Jones will be running a second class from Monday, January 6. It will take place between 1pm and 2pm at Amblecote Christian Centre in Brettell Lane.

For more information contact Deb Jones on 01384 288350.

Meet over a pint

STOURBRIDGE business people will get together for a 'pint after work' meeting on Tuesday. The networking event will be held at Graham's Place in Bridgnorth Road, Wollaston. Email Emma Rose at emmarose@talbotlaw.co.uk

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NEWS

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RHODES

HERE'S a nasty new twist on the 'update your email account' scam designed by internet crooks to extract your personal details. This time the message is: "Your Five incoming mails were placed on hold status due to the recent upgrade to our database. In order to receive the messages, click here to update your account." The threat is that they have your emails. They don't. And if you hover your cursor over the alleged sender's name, in this case "BT Customer Care," it should reveal the true (and probably hijacked) email address of the sender. You can pass this information on to BT but I'm not sure they're interested.

□□□□□□□□

THAT HS2 timeline in full. 2009: Government proposes the new line. 2010: First HS2 report paper published. December 2013: MPs of the Commons Transport Committee declare that HS2 is "essential" for the UK's future. So something we had never heard of four years ago is suddenly essential. How stupid do they think we are?

□□□□□□□□

SO FAREWELL, Ronnie Biggs. We should never celebrate criminals or their crimes, but you had to admire Biggs's cheek. In one interview, repeated last week, Biggs claimed that the chief purpose of prison is to rehabilitate offenders and, as he had rehabilitated himself, it was not necessary for him to serve his term. Did anybody not smile?

□□□□□□□□

LOOKING back, the Great Train Robbers' haul of £2.6 million seems puny. Inflation has soared and at today's values it would be worth about £46 million. But something else has changed. Back in 1963 this robbery horrified the nation because it was a calculated assault on national icons we cherished and respected: the Treasury, the Post Office, the night-mail train and, above all, our fine banking industry. If someone stole £46 million from the banks today, would we be horrified? Or would we reflect on what a tiny sum this was, compared to the billions lost through greed and fraud when the banking system imploded? Respectable men in smart suits cost us far, far more than Biggs and his gang.

□□□□□□□□

AS the row over sexually segregated audiences at British universities rumbles on, Aston University declares that it would tolerate such an arrangement at religious discussions so long as it was voluntary. And what if an audience voluntarily decided they'd like to smoke?

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Views sought on cuts to adult social care services

A CONSULTATION has been launched on the future of adult social care services by cash-strapped Dudley Council as it battles to trim millions of pounds from its budgets.

The council is asking residents for their views on what services it should be prioritising over the next three years.

by Heather Large

It comes as bosses try to make savings of almost £60m by 2017, following reductions in government funding.

It's not yet known how much will be cut from the adult social care budget but residents are being invited to have their say on what services are important to them.

Early

Adult social services support people including those with an illness or disability, the elderly and carers.

A series of consultation events have been announced by the council.

Cabinet member for adult and community services, Councillor Dave Branwood, said: "At this stage it is too early to identify the budget for adult social care in 2014/15, details will be announced in early 2014 as part of the council's overall budget-setting process."

"Government funding for adult social care continues

to reduce whilst the number of vulnerable people in our community is rising rapidly."

He added: "Faced with these pressures it is essential we listen to the views of local people to find out which services they value most."

The first event was held in Brierley Hill before Christmas and the next will be on Tuesday, January 7, at Insight, South Street, Brierley Hill from 4.30pm to 7pm.

There will be further events on January 9 at Halesowen Cricket Club from 10am to 12.30pm, and at Christ Church and Stambermill, Lye, from 2.30pm to 5pm.

Sessions will also be held on January 17 at Sedgley Community Centre from 10am to 12.30pm and at Queens Cross Network, Wellington Road, in Dudley, from 2.30pm to 5pm.

People are asked to confirm if they wish to attend one of the events by calling 01384 815130.

Fine record for departing head



Pupil Ruby Hollis, aged four, left, with Tamzin Adams, six, Mackenzie Parfitt, five, Angela Hannaway, head teacher, Maysoon Yafai, nine, Youcef Belbina, nine, in Halesowen CE Primary School's new class room 'The Garden Room'

HEADTEACHER Angela Hannaway has said a sad farewell to pupils and staff but is off to her new job on a triumphant note.

She leaves behind students that are achieving their best after turning around Halesowen Church of

England Primary from a 'satisfactory' school to one that is rated by Ofsted as 'good with outstanding features'.

As testament to the improvements she has made in her six years at the school - currently in its 175th anniversary year - a new £70,000

classroom was opened in the run up to Christmas. Called the garden room, it opens out into a courtyard area with benches and a fountain.

Mrs Hannaway, 50, from Quarry Bank, is moving on to lead Gigmill Primary School in Stourbridge.

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Pupils pay tribute at service as memorial to Christina unveiled

COLOURFUL, courageous, charming, creative and charismatic – words used to describe Christina Edkins at a ceremony to unveil a memorial stone at her school.

Past and present students at Leasowes High School in Halesowen gathered round the engraved Yorkstone prominently placed at the entrance to the school for the emotional service. They were joined by governors, teachers and Christina's parents, Jason and Kathleen Edkins.

The popular schoolgirl was stabbed to death on a public bus on her way to school. Headteacher Neil Shaw led the ceremony at the memorial stone which was placed in a memorial garden decked with purple decorations – her favourite colour.

Grief

Speaking to the family, he said: "We know that the pain and grief endured by yourselves, by the student body, by the staff and governors has been palpable and I think that at times like this togetherness and support and love are what is needed to get through."

"The Leasowes community has tried its best to honour and respect Christina's memory and I am immensely proud of the way the students have conducted themselves and stood firm in the face of this awful tragedy. The true test of a person is their response to difficulty and adversity and Leasowes students and staff have showed tremendous resilience and compassion and empathy."

Of the memorial stone, he said: "I hope it can be a reminder to us all that life sadly can be very short but we all have a duty to do our best for one another while we still have the gift that is life. Christina certainly tried to live life to the full and is an example to us all."

Reverend Chris Siviter, of The Flame Community Church in Rowley Regis, said the stone conveyed messages of strength, stability, remembrance and joy.

One of Christina's friends, former Leasowes High School student Obri Gonzalez said: "From up there she will be smiling away knowing so many people have gathered to keep memories alive that we shared with her. What a beautiful memorial."

The school was stunned by Christina's death on March 7 but it has worked alongside the family by carrying out a number of projects in tribute to her.

Among them was a special memorial award in memory of Christina which was given to Obri at the end-of-year awards in June. It came with 16 miniatures which will be kept by the first 16 winners – 16 was how old Christina was when she died.

A trophy was also made in Christina's name for the school's netball team, which she was part of.

The memorial stone unveiled on December 19 bore the engraving 'Forever in the thoughts of friends, teachers and all who knew her. Greatly loved and sadly missed'.

Following its unveiling, a minute's silence was impeccably observed by the hundreds of students at the school, from Year 7 to 11.

The stone was donated by Appleton Quarry in Yorkshire.

Philip Simelane was detained to a secure psychiatric hospital indefinitely by a judge after admitting manslaughter at Birmingham Crown Court in October.

Last month, a memorial was also unveiled close to where Christina was killed in Hagley Road in Birmingham.

The stone is circular with a picture of Christina at the top and a dedication beneath.

Mr Shaw was among 30 people from Leasowes High School who also attended the unveiling of the memorial in Birmingham.



Above, pupils, staff and family of Christina Edkins, pictured below, observe a minute's silence at the unveiling of her memorial at Leasowes High School. Below right, parents Jason and Kathleen Edkins lay flowers at the stone



NEWS

in brief

Safer crossing bid at college campus

PLANS to create a crossing for students at a new £18 million vocational campus cross a busy road have been lodged with Dudley Council.

Bosses at Dudley College are concerned the lives of students visiting the Dudley Evolve campus could be in danger when they cross The Broadway.

A planning application for the work would see a puffin crossing installed.

The college has 1,500 students and the number crossing the road, near the Tower Street junction, has increased dramatically. A survey, carried out by an external consultant, suggested some form of crossing was required.

Boost is given to area's foodbank

THE Quinton and Oldbury Foodbank received a donation of two tons of food from Tesco customers in Quinton during the run-up to the festive season.

Food vouchers can be obtained from social services, some GP practices, housing offices and neighbourhood offices.

More affordable homes on the way

HOUSES and bungalows are being built on former garage sites in Dudley as part of scheme providing affordable homes. Black Country Housing Group has begun work on 17 properties in Hartland Avenue, Martin Close and White Poplars.

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NEWS FEATURE

IN MY VIEW

WITH
MARK
ANDREWS

SOARING levels of personal debt. Crippling rates of indirect taxation. The fact that children in Vietnam stand a better chance of getting a decent grounding in the three Rs than they do in Britain.

All important issues, you would no doubt agree. But it's good to see that MP Mary Creagh has spotted another major injustice which should be tackled as a matter of urgency.

Thomas the Tank Engine. Miss Creagh says the lack of female train drivers in Britain is a 'national scandal' and that children's television shows and 'negative stereotypes' were partly to blame.

"In the Thomas the Tank Engine books there are almost no female engines," she says. "The only female characters are an annoyance, a nuisance and in some cases a danger to the functioning of the railway."

Lighten up, love, it's a children's book. Of course, there is no reason at all why women should not become train drivers. They don't require too many map-reading skills, and the reverse parking shouldn't be a problem. That was a joke, by the way.

But seriously, if young girls want to become engine drivers, are they really going to be deterred because it was Edward, not Edwina, who got a new coat of paint?

Given that Miss Creagh seems to have spent quite a bit of time studying the works of Rev Wilbert Awdry, she would no doubt be aware that little is known about the gender of the actual engine drivers. We know Edward's driver, Charlie Sands, is a man, but who is not to say that the company operated a strict equal opportunities policy, with exactly 50 per cent of the drivers being female?

And a committed feminist like Miss Creagh will surely agree with the way the male engines were portrayed as having inherent character flaws. For example, macho Big Gordon was clearly an egomaniac who got his cornpuance when he blew a gasket.

And then there was hypochondriac Henry who was afraid of a few drops of rain.

"It went into a tunnel. And squeaked through its funnel. And never came out again."

Clearly a case of man flu. But he would have fitted in well on today's railways.

JUST a thought about these Boxing Day sales.

On almost every weekday of the year, thousands of the big stores do not open until 9 or even 10 in the morning, when the majority of people are at work.

Then, they shut up shop at 5.30pm, so nobody can do their shopping after work, either.

Then, on one of the few days of the year when most of the population is off work and free to call in at any time, they decide to open up at 6am. Great planning.



Jack, centre, seen with the Friends of the Staffordshire Regiment, at Whittington Barracks



The bullet that was left in Jack, but not discovered until an X-ray years later



Proud family - from left, nephew Kevin Edwards, grandson Ben Willetts, daughter Julie Willetts and son-in-law Sid Willetts

Bullet memento of our Jack the wartime hero

TO MOST people it may seem like an ordinary bullet - a relic of a long lost battlefield.

But to the family of one Second World War paratrooper, Jack Mansell, it is a reminder of their relative's past in one of the bloodiest episodes of the conflict.

The scrap of metal was found in the ashes of the veteran, from West Bromwich, who died in hospital aged 90.

His friends, family and members of the Armed Forces paid tribute to the Black Country Soldier who was one of 35,000 allied soldiers dropped behind enemy lines in the Netherlands during Operation Market Garden in 1944.

The operation, which was intended to force an entry in Germany over the Lower Rhine, had been seen as a way of finishing the war by Christmas but was a devastating defeat for the Allies after they encountered a far stronger resistance than they had expected. Between 15,130 and 17,200 Allies were killed, wounded or captured.

Operation

At the time Private Mansell was only 21 and was fighting with the elite airborne unit of the Second Battalion of the South Staffordshire Regiment, which he had signed up to because they were based close to home.

Pte Mansell was part of an anti-tank unit manning a six-pound gun and on the day of the operation his team landed by Horsa glider in a meadow about six miles from the vital road bridge at Arnhem.

After fighting waves of German tanks for several days, their guns ran out of ammunition and he and his fellow comrades were forced to pull back. But during their withdrawal Pte Mansell was shot by a German sniper in the right hip and taken to a field hospital.

The bullet that the Pte thought had passed through him remained lodged in his body for 69 years. It was only discovered during an x-ray of his abdomen during the 1980s.

His nephew Kevin Edwards said: "During the 1980s Jack injured his



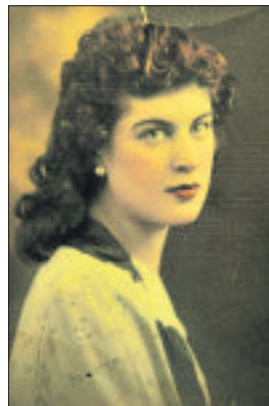
abdomen while moving some metal at work. A routine hospital x-ray showed a bullet located in his right hip. All those years ago, Jack had thought the German bullet had passed through him - in fact it was still lodged in his body. It was left there as it gave him no trouble."

Pte Mansell was cremated at West Bromwich Crematorium, on November 22, and to the surprise of the staff they managed to find the German bullet among his ashes.

Mr Edwards added: "It had melted a little, but was easily recognisable."

A couple of days after arriving at the field hospital, as the Germans arrived and took over, Pte Mansell and five friends slipped out.

The escape attempt proved to be in vain and Pte Mansell was captured quickly and sent to work in German mines and on the railways. Then in the spring of 1945, while on a forced march, a tank with a white star on its side



appeared on a hill and an RAF Typhoon fighter-bomber flew low over - he knew he was finally free.

A couple of weeks later Pte Mansell was back at home - a comfort to his parents whose other son, Tom, had been killed in action by a landmine in the final weeks of the war. He had been serving with the Fifth Battalion The Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry.

After the war, Pte Mansell returned to Germany, where he worked as a dispatch rider and spent hours of his free time riding around the war cemeteries on his motorbike, trying to find Tom's resting place.

After years of research on the internet Tom's grave was located on the War Graves Commission website, and in September 1999 Pte Mansell finally visited his brother's grave for the first time. Mr Edwards said: "Jack was a very proud man. He never considered himself to be a hero, although he was."

The 53-year-old from Pinewood



Jack and his beloved dog Buffy

Close, Walsall added: "He was a very popular and well-loved man. Men like him are literally a dying breed, and should never be forgotten. It would be a shame if his passing was to go unnoticed." Julie Willetts, the paratrooper's daughter said: "My dad was a very easy going, family orientated man. He was a massive Baggies fan and went to a lot of the matches."

His funeral was attended by more than 300 friends and family members, as well as five regimental standard bearers and a bugler who sounded The Last Post. Guests also donated to veterans' charity Help for Heroes raising £620 in his memory. The 59-year-old from Fairfield Avenue, Great Barr, added: "Despite all the amazing things he did, he never really spoke to me about what he had done in the war until the very end of his life. The stories I've been told about him are amazing." He also leaves two sons Terry, 66, and Paul, 44, seven grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

THROUGH THE YEARS

1983...

SHOPS were evacuated, traffic halted and Army bomb experts called in after officers became suspicious about an illegally parked car in Wolverhampton. A young motorist from Bolton had parked his Triumph 1500 outside the RAF and Royal Navy recruiting offices in Bell Street.

A LEADING Midland department store was reopening after a major revamp, immediately after the Christmas sales frenzy. Crossroads star Jane Rossington was joined by Mayor of Dudley Councillor David Caunt for the reopening of Cooks of Dudley.

THE personal hi-fi craze was putting the hearing of thousands of young people at risk, warned four leading organisations for the deaf. The Association for the Hard of Hearing, the British Deaf Association, the Royal National Institute for the Deaf and the National Deaf Children's Society said loud disco music and home headsets were also a threat to hearing.

1993...

A PRISONER who resembled 'something out of Star Wars' after being encased from the waste up in bandages went missing from a hospital in Evesham after being treated for a spinal injury. But a search was called off when the man arrived back at Long Lartin jail near Evesham before the officers escorting him. His mother said he had misunderstood the arrangements and made his own way back.

THERE was little festive cheer in Bosnia, with a ceasefire agreed the previous week by the warring Croats, Serbs and Muslims being ignored as fighting continued.

Meanwhile, the IRA defiantly said it would continue its terror attacks in an unrepentant end-of-year message.

2003...

BOB Monkhouse died aged 75, following a two-and-a-half-year battle with prostate cancer. It was the ATV series The Golden Shot in 1967 which truly established him as the king of the television gameshow.

EXPLOSIONS that could be heard for miles around rocked the Black Country when six oxygen tanks exploded in a van parked outside a pub. The van, which had been stolen from a pharmaceutical firm in Tamworth, had been set alight at 11.30pm after it was parked outside the Horse and Jockey pub in Bilston. Windows at the pub and a nearby amusement arcade were shattered.

AVERAGE house prices in West Bromwich had risen by 15 per cent over the previous 12 months, putting it seventh in a national table of property 'hotspots'.

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LETTERS

Bostin' ventures worth supporting

THERE are two things I would like to bring to the public's attention. Firstly, I was kindly asked to give a talk/performance at the new Dudley archives, situated next to the Black Country Museum. On thanking the team for their invite and the audience, who seemed to enjoy the event, I want to say what a magnificent space the archive is.

After spending years travelling up to Roseville, the new building offers a modern experience, if that's the right word. The spacious inviting foyer, meeting rooms and cool green tones of the flooring lends itself to the backdrop

of the wooded zoo and the museum on the other side. I'm sure it will be an enormous success and will be more community functional than the new Birmingham Library which, although an incredibly interesting building, has the feel of a tourist attraction.

My second point to raise is Black Country Community Radio, which can be listened to on the net every day. I and Lozz were invited to host shows on alternate fortnights as a way of bringing the Black Country to its listeners.

Fizzog, the brilliant local theatre group, also do a show as do other pre-

senters from around the region. A tremendous amount of hard work goes into the venture by loads of folk working behind the scenes with the objective of getting an FM licence.

So here's your chance to support two new ventures that are both all about our region and people. The archives opens in January and our shows go out at 10pm on Mondays and 6pm on Fridays. Give em' both a go they're bostin'!

DR B DAKIN
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Outdoor gym just a waste of money

KINVER seems to have a habit of having money wasted.

A few weeks ago I took my son to the skate park on the marsh playing fields. I haven't been down there since I was at Edgecliff School. I was surprised to see the Legion is closed and the building is becoming derelict and overgrown with bushes to the side of it.

As I drove round by the KCA there's the kid's park and a nice new outdoor gym with not a single person using it, unlike the skate park where ten to 15 kids were enjoying themselves. Why waste money on an outdoor gym? It might be okay on a beach in California, but come on, Kinver? And there's already a gym in the school.

What a total waste of money. It would have been better spent on a BMX track or a bigger skate park.

J GUEST
Elmwood Road
Stourbridge

LETTERS to the Editor

POST

Dudley Chronicle, Chronicle
Editorial, 51-53 Queen Street,
Wolverhampton
WV1 1ES

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number of the writer. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

E-MAIL

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A big thank you from Lions Club sleigh fundraisers

THE Kingswinford and Stourbridge Lions Club would like to say a very big thank you to everyone who gave so generously during our annual Santa Sleigh tour around Kingswinford and Stourbridge.

To all of the grown-ups and children, who braved the wet weather to meet Santa we hope you had a very Happy Christmas.

During our travels Santa and his Sleigh collected £8,063 which will be distributed by the Club to nominated charities at a presentation evening to be held at the Stourbridge Institute and Social Club on Monday, January 27.

We would also like to thank the management of Sainsbury's Amblecote, Asda Brierley Hill, The Ryemarket and ALDI Wollaston for allowing us to collect during December. Money collected at these locations will be shared between Compton Hospice and Mary Stevens, as well as other local charities.

J ZULIK
Santa Sleigh Master 2013
Kingswinford and Stourbridge Lions Club

Call a halt on market place £6m scheme

IT BEGGARS belief that Dudley Council have given the go ahead on works to the market place costing some £6 million pounds plus, at the time of austerity measures imposed by this coalition government.

Dudley Council have to find over £57ms in cuts, they have just been told they will also get £15m pounds less in grant money and they still intend to carry on with these unwanted works on the market place.

It should be stopped immediately.

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Poppy total

NETHERTON Royal British Legion would like to thank the people and businesses for their generosity in raising £5,327.57 for the poppy appeal.

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NEWS

Roof firm pair guilty of preying on retired couple

THEY preyed on a retired couple, using aggressive sales tactics to get them to sign up to work costing almost £3,000.

Their victims were pressured to put their signature to paper and told if they did not do so immediately then they would lose a discount totalling thousands of pounds.

The work they offered came with a promise that painting the roof would reduce a loss in heating of up to 40 per cent – but neither the salesman or company boss could prove the figure was correct.

Coercion

Boss Edward Hogan and salesman Stewart Fawke, from Roofguard Protective Coatings Limited, were together found guilty of 12 charges after a trial at Dudley Magistrates' Court.

The pair were caught when trading standards officers from Dudley Council turned up at the home of the victims in Halesowen as the company began £2,883 worth of work.

Finding them guilty, Mrs Anne Robinson, chairman of the bench, said: "We find that the sales process as a whole together with the disparity between quoted costs of works a deliberate, well orchestrated course of action designed to exert undue influence, coercion and harassment."

The trial heard how Fawke, aged 46, of Shirley Road, Birmingham, had visited the couple's address and shown a leaflet and DVD which made a claim that the paint could save

up to 40 per cent heat loss. He quoted them a price of £5,115. But he then dropped the price to £2,883.

Mrs Robinson said: "The quotation gave misleading and false information designed to induce the customer to sign the contract immediately."

The trial heard how Hogan, 56, of Chapel Street in Derby, was responsible for the leaflet, as owner of the company. He said he relied on information given by the roof product supplier.

Fawke was found guilty of two charges of fraud by false representation. Hogan was found guilty of two counts aiding and abetting a dishonest failure to disclose information.

The pair were found guilty of three counts of engaging in a commercial practice which is a misleading action containing false information and one count of engaging in a commercial practice which was aggressive. Both were cleared on one charge of engaging in a commercial practice which is a misleading action containing false information.

The firm, based in Derby, was found guilty of two counts of fraud by false representation, three counts engaging in a commercial practice which is a misleading action containing false information and three counts of engaging in a commercial practice which was aggressive.

The firm had entered a guilty plea on one charge of engaging in a commercial practice which is a misleading action containing false information. Sentencing is due on February 25.



Guilty – Company boss Eddie Hogan, left, and salesman Stewart Fawke leaving court in Dudley

Countdown but not out

A COUNTDOWN aficionado from Cradley Heath says he isn't ready to quit despite his defeat in the show's semi final. Glen Webb has lived and breathed the game since he was 17, when he got to the quarter-finals of Channel 4's longest-running show.

After more than 21 years, he returned to the TV brainteaser and remained unbeaten for nine matches in a row, scoring the second highest score in the show's history after racking up an astonishing 141 points out of a possible 145. He went a step further, making it to December 19's semi but the 39-year-old from Sandwell Grove was defeated by 17-year-old Callum Todd, who won 107 to Glen's 82.

Glen said: "I only got a couple of hours' sleep before that day's filming because of a sickness and by the time it came to our match I wasn't as sharp as I am normally. I don't want people to think I am making excuses, I was defeated by a worthy opponent who deserved to win."

It had seemed that he was on the path to being crowned champion after defeating Jonathan Liew in the quarter-final with a 107-45 victory.

"I hope to continue playing the game at some of the national tournaments and might even train one of my friends," added the financial planner. "I hope to one day be invited back to play in a champion of champions match."

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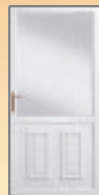
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Supporters of the Dudley Hippodrome celebrate the venue's 75th anniversary



An interior shot of the Hippodrome taken in 1957



Dudley Hippodrome, which opened in 1938, during its heyday in the 1950s



Comedy duo Laurel & Hardy also played there



Bob Hope, second left, at the venue back in 1957

Hippodrome's future still hangs in balance

THE opening of the new Dudley Hippodrome, attended by local luminaries such as Wimbledon champion Dorothy Round, was billed as the greatest event on Dudley's social calendar in 1938.

Just over 75 years on, the future of the venue – which once played host to the giants of showbusiness – hangs in the balance.

The likes of Laurel and Hardy, Bob Hope, and Chico Marx all played there, as well as rising stars Ken Dodd, Morecambe & Wise and Bruce Forsyth all played there.

Dudley Council, which bought the building in 2010, had planned to demolish it as part of a regeneration project, but the plans were put on ice in August following concerted protests by the Friends of Dudley Hippodrome. In its heyday,

it was the biggest theatre in the West Midlands, according to historian Paul Collins. For its first 15 years, the Hippodrome was considered to be Britain's most modern variety theatre.

Its 1953 production of Jack and the Beanstalk, starring Harry Secombe, was the first pantomime to be screened live on TV.

Ironically, television was probably the Hippodrome's downfall as it struggled for audiences, and was making considerable losses by the late 1950s.

The Kennedy family, which had opened the theatre, gave up in 1958, putting their business into liquidation. The Hippodrome continued as a theatre under a string of different owners, but was increasingly being used for other forms of entertainment. Wrestling nights became a regular fixture in the

early 60s, then striptease shows, and gradually it evolved into a bingo hall.

In 1973 it was taken over by Ladbroke's and renamed Cesar's Palace. Variety acts such as Mike and Bernie Winters, Ken Dodd and Tommy Steele continued to appear, but in the form of late night cabaret once bingo had finished.

The Hippodrome's fate appeared to have been sealed when Dudley Council applied to demolish it, having dismissed the Friends' business plan as requiring up to £10 million worth of investment. But the Hippodrome received a stay of execution when a decision was deferred.

More than 32,000 people have signed a petition calling for the theatre to be saved, and there is no shortage of ideas, or volunteers, offering to help with its restoration.

By Mark Andrews



Tommy Cooper at the theatre during King of Hearts in 1954



Ken Dodd (top) celebrates the Hippodrome's birthday in 1957

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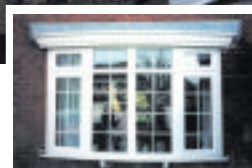
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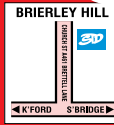
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NEWS

Archives on move to purpose-built centre



Helen Donald and Elaine Nicholson in the new strongroom



The new £6m archives building is due to open this month

THE huge task of packing, cataloguing and moving hundreds of boxes of documents and photographs is nearing completion for the opening of a new £6 million archives and local history centre.

Staff are busy working hard behind the scenes to get the new centre in Tipton Road, Dudley, ready for when it opens its doors to the public on Tuesday, January 14.

Almost all of the two miles worth of archive material has been relocated from the old centre in Coseley.

Twenty-two volunteers were recruited to help with the process which needed to be undertaken extremely carefully as many of the precious documents are very fragile and cannot be exposed to light.

A state-of-the-art strongroom now holds all of the archives in optimum, temperature-controlled conditions.

Visitors will be able to walk into the large foyer where there will be temporary exhibitions, seats and tables, vending machines and a shop.

Near the foyer will be lockers for belongings to be stored while people are looking at the records and a permanent exhibition area for bigger items in the collection.

Family

There is a main search room which will be set up with desks and chairs where archive documents will be brought out to people. There will be two smaller family history rooms where people can look at more sensitive records in private.

There are also conference rooms that will be available for hire and rooms dedicated to cataloguing.

Councillor Stuart Turner, cabinet member responsible for archives said: "It's great that our new archives and local history centre is now complete. It really is looking fantastic and will represent a great resource for the people of Dudley borough. The staff have worked really hard to get everything moved into the centre, a hugely challenging task. We are looking forward now to the public opening and hope that people will come along and have a look."

The centre has been part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund, as part of their funding of the redevelopment of the Castle Hill area. The council says it is committed to preserving and protecting the borough's historic collections which date back to the 12th century. The collection had outgrown the existing site after years of items being accumulated.

It will also be used to store documents for Sandwell Council. Tours of the centre will be available and can be booked by calling 01384 815568. The new centre will be open to the public from Tuesday to Saturday, from 9am to 5pm, except Thursdays when it will open 9.30am until 7pm.

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Please take a moment to look through our latest list of courses which are starting in January. We are offering one-day taster sessions and workshops in many subjects to give people the opportunity to try a subject before signing up to a longer course.

Courses are held across the borough in neighbourhood learning centres, libraries, schools and other community venues during the daytime, evenings and weekends.

We are also offering courses and workshops at the new Archives and Local History Centre in Dudley. Courses here start throughout the Spring term.

For more information please contact the centre where the course is running.

Course title	Weeks	Start	Day	Time	Cost
All Saints Church Sedgley					
Fred Richings / Emma Balme 01384 812337					
Gentle Exercise for mature people	10	22/01/14	Wed	11:30-12:30	£25
Brierley Hill Neighbourhood Learning Centre					
Kim Thompson-Jones / Geri Nardiello 01384 812371					
Art - creative with pastels	10	21/01/14	Tue	16:30-18:30	£52
Computers taster	3	15/01/14	Wed	13:00-15:00	£15
Computer skills for e-mails	10	15/01/14	Wed	13:00-15:00	£52
Computer skills for word processing	10	15/01/14	Wed	13:00-15:00	£52
Computers for beginners	10	23/01/14	Thu	12:30-14:30	£52
Computers and the Internet	10	15/01/14	Wed	13:00-15:00	£52
ESOL - English for Speakers of Other Languages	10	22/01/14	Wed	12:30-14:30	£102
Functional Skills - English	12	07/01/14	Tue	09:30-12:00	Free
Functional Skills - English	10	20/01/14	Mon	10:00-12:00	Free
Functional Skills - English	10	20/01/14	Mon	13:00-15:00	Free
Functional Skills - English	13	10/01/14	Fri	09:30-12:00	Free
Functional Skills - Maths	10	24/01/14	Fri	09:30-11:30	Free
Functional Skills - Maths	13	09/01/14	Thu	09:30-12:00	Free
Functional Skills - Maths	13	10/01/14	Fri	12:30-15:00	Free
History - World War 1 Commemoration	6	22/01/14	Wed	19:00-21:00	£26
History - World War 1 Commemoration	6	21/01/14	Tue	12:30-14:30	£26
Sage Accounting*	15	14/01/14	Tue	12:30-15:00	Ring
Brierley Hill Scout Hut					
Kim Thompson-Jones / Geri Nardiello 01384 812371					
Zumba	10	14/01/14	Tue	13:30-14:30	£27
Castle & Priory Neighbourhood Learning Centre					
Emma Balme / Fred Richings 01384 812337					
Computers - a taster course for beginners	3	13/01/14	Mon	13:00-15:00	£15
Computer skills for word processing	10	13/01/14	Mon	09:30-11:30	£52
Computer skills for e-mails	10	13/01/14	Mon	13:00-15:00	£52
Computers - beginners Internet and e-mail	10	21/01/14	Tue	10:00-12:00	£50
Construction Trades - taster day	1	22/01/14	Wed	10:00-15:00	Free
Festive Arts and Crafts	4	19/03/14	Wed	13:00-15:00	£25
Level 2 Floristry Qualification - a taster course	3	20/01/14	Mon	10:00-12:00	Ring
Flower Arranging - mixed abilities	10	20/01/14	Mon	12:30-14:30	£55
Meditation - an Introduction	4	21/01/14	Tue	13:00-14:00	£10
Live 4 Less - managing your money better	6	23/01/14	Thu	12:30-14:30	Free
Love, Gifts and Crafts - Valentine special	3	22/01/14	Wed	13:00-15:00	£20
Sewing - make a textile bag	6	20/01/14	Mon	10:00-12:00	£30
Dudley Library					
Fred Richings / Emma Balme 01384 812337					
Computers - a taster course for beginners	3	13/01/14	Mon	09:30-11:30	£15
Computer skills for word processing	10	13/01/14	Mon	09:30-11:30	£52
Computer skills for e-mails	10	13/01/14	Mon	09:30-11:30	£52
Computers skills for the Internet	10	13/01/14	Mon	09:30-11:30	£52

Course title	Weeks	Start	Day	Time	Cost
Dudley Wood Neighbourhood Learning Centre					
Glen Ostins 01384 816471					
Reflexology - an introduction	6	06/01/14	Mon	10:00-12:00	£32
Alternative and Complementary Therapy	6	06/01/14	Mon	10:00-12:00	£26
Anxiety Management - recognise & control symptoms	10	14/01/14	Tue	10:00-12:00	£52
Award in Preparing to Work in Adult Social Care - Level 1	9	15/01/14	Wed	10:00-12:00	£110
Baby Massage	5	16/01/14	Thu	13:00-14:00	£14.50
Computers taster	3	16/01/14	Thu	13:00-15:00	£15
Computers taster	3	16/01/14	Thu	09:30-11:30	£15
Computer skills for Emails	10	16/01/14	Thu	13:00-15:00	£52
Computer skills for Emails	10	16/01/14	Thu	09:30-11:30	£52
Computer Skills for word processing	10	16/01/14	Thu	13:00-15:00	£52
Computer Skills for word processing	10	16/01/14	Thu	09:30-11:30	£52
Computers - Internet	10	16/01/14	Thu	13:00-15:00	£52
Computers - Internet	10	16/01/14	Thu	09:30-11:30	£52
Computers Skills	10	16/01/14	Thu	09:30-11:30	£52
Computers Skills	10	16/01/14	Thu	13:00-15:00	£52
Exercise - keep fit	6	06/01/14	Mon	13:00-14:00	£14
Family Learning - Music and Crafts for Kids	5	16/01/14	Thu	10:00-11:30	£17
Functional Skills - English	12	13/01/14	Mon	09:30-11:30	Free
Functional Skills - English	12	09/01/14	Thu	12:45-14:45	Free
Functional Skills - English and Maths	13	06/01/14	Mon	12:30-14:30	Free
Functional Skills - English and Maths	13	07/01/14	Tue	12:45-14:45	Free
Functional Skills - English and Maths	13	07/01/14	Tue	10:00-12:00	Free
Functional Skills - English and Maths	13	06/01/14	Mon	12:30-14:30	Free
Music Tots	5	16/01/14	Thu	10:00-11:30	£20
Office Skills	10	14/01/14	Tue	10:00-12:00	£52
Photography - beginners and intermediate	6	09/01/14	Thu	17:30-19:30	£26
Pilates - beginners and intermediate	10	15/01/14	Wed	12:30-13:30	£22
Sewing Machines and other Craft skills	10	17/01/14	Fri	10:00-12:00	£52
Yoga	10	07/01/14	Tue	17:30-18:30	£22
Elizabeth House Residential Home, Lye					
Craig Myatt 01384 816463					
Gentle Exercise for older people	12	14/01/14	Tue	15:00-16:00	£32
Fens Pool Community Centre					
Kim Thompson-Jones 01384 812371					
Sewing-all Levels	10	14/01/14	Tue	10:00-12:00	£52
Halesowen Library					
Glen Ostins 01384 816471					
Functional Skills - English	12	13/01/14	Mon	13:00-15:00	Free
Computers taster	3	14/01/14	Tue	09:30-11:30	£15
Computers taster	3	15/01/14	Wed	09:30-11:30	£15
Computer skills for e-mails	10	14/01/14	Tue	09:30-11:30	£52
Computer skills for e-mails	10	15/01/14	Wed	09:30-11:30	£52
Computer skills for word processing	10	14/01/14	Tue	09:30-11:30	£52
Computer skills for word processing	10	15/01/14	Wed	09:30-11:30	£52
Computer skills for the Internet	10	14/01/14	Tue	09:30-11:30	£52
Computer skills for the Internet	10	15/01/14	Wed	09:30-11:30	£52
Kingswinford Library					
Kim Thompson-Jones 01384 812371					
Art and Design - introduction	5	13/01/14	Mon	12:45-14:45	£27
Computers taster	3	15/01/14	Wed	13:00-15:00	£2
Computer skills for e-mails	10	15/01/14	Wed	13:00-15:00	£52
Computer skills for word processing	10	15/01/14	Wed	13:00-15:00	£52
Computers skills for the Internet	10	15/01/14	Wed	13:00-15:00	£52
Flower Arranging Workshop - all levels	1	20/01/14	Mon	10:00-12:00	Free
Flower Arranging Workshop - all levels	1	20/01/14	Mon	10:00-12:00	Free
Flower Arranging - all levels	3	27/01/14	Mon	10:00-12:00	£17
Jewellery Making Workshop	1	23/01/14	Thu	10:00-12:00	Free
Jewellery Making Workshop	1	23/01/14	Thu	10:00-12:00	Free
Jewellery Making	3	30/01/14	Thu	10:00-12:00	£17
Leasowes High School					
Kevin Pearson 01384 816287 / 07825 194160					
Black Country Crafts	10	14/01/14	Tue	19:00-21:00	£50
Glass Art Crafts	10	13/01/14	Mon	19:00-21:00	£50
Drama and performing arts - mixed abilities	10	14/01/14	Tue	19:00-21:00	£50
French for beginners	5	15/01/14	Wed	19:00-21:00	£25
French-intermediate and advanced Level	10	15/01/14	Wed	19:00-21:00	£50
Guitars - learn from the legends	10	14/01/14	Tue	19:00-21:00	£50
Jewellery Making	10	13/01/14	Mon	19:00-21:00	£50
Keyboard Music for beginners	10	13/01/14	Mon	19:00-21:00	£50
Digital Photography for beginners	10	14/01/14	Tue	19:00-21:00	£50
Pilates for beginners	10	14/01/14	Tue	18:30-20:00	£37.50
Portrait Painting	10	15/01/14	Wed	19:00-21:00	£50
Pottery - all levels	10	14/01/14	Tue	19:00-21:00	£50
Water Colour Painting - all levels	10	15/01/14	Wed	19:00-21:00	£50
Water Colour Painting - intermediate	10	17/01/14	Fri	14:00-17:00	£75
Yoga for beginners	10	13/01/14	Mon	19:30-21:00	£37.50
Yoga and Meditation	10	13/01/14	Mon	19:00-21:00	£50
Choral Singing for beginners	3	24/01/14	Fri	14:30-16:30	£15

Course title	Weeks	Start	Day	Time	Cost
Margaret Vine Sheltered Housing Kath Glazzard 01384 816496					
Gentle Exercise for older people	10	06/01/14	Mon	13:30-14:30	£27
Myles Court, Brierley Hill Kim Thompson-Jones 01384 812371					
Keep Fit - gentle exercise	13	09/01/14	Thu	10:00-11:00	£27
Nene Close Sheltered Housing - Stourbridge Kim Thompson-Jones 01384 812371					
Keep Fit - gentle exercise	13	09/01/14	Thu	13:30-14:30	£34.50
Pensnett & Brockmoor Neighbourhood Learning Centre Sarah Carr / Craig Myatt 01384 816440					
Art and Crafts using polymer clay	10	17/01/14	Fri	13:00-15:00	£52
Art - drawing and painting techniques	10	17/01/14	Fri	11:00-13:00	£52
Computers taster course	3	16/01/14	Thu	13:00-15:00	£15
Computer skills for e-mails	10	16/01/14	Thu	13:00-15:00	£52
Computer Skills for word processing	10	16/01/14	Thu	13:00-15:00	£52
Computers skills for the Internet	10	16/01/14	Thu	13:00-15:00	£52
Counselling - Introduction	10	15/01/14	Wed	19:00-21:00	£52
Functional Skills - English	10	13/01/14	Mon	09:45-11:45	Free
Functional Skills - English	10	14/01/14	Tue	19:00-21:00	Free
Functional Skills Maths	13	08/01/14	Wed	12:30-15:00	Free
Functional Skills - Maths	10	07/01/14	Tue	19:00-21:00	Free
Family History - who do you think you are?	10	13/01/14	Mon	18:45-20:45	£52
Family History - who do you think you are?	10	14/01/14	Tue	10:00-12:00	£52
Family History - who do you think you are?	10	14/01/14	Tue	13:00-15:00	£52
Introduction to Childcare	10	16/01/14	Thu	10:00-12:00	£52
Maths-fast track to Level 2 Maths	*	*	Wed	19:00-21:00	Free
Sign Language - an introduction	10	14/01/14	Tue	09:45-11:45	£52
Silver Jubilee Healthy Hub Fred Richings / Emma Balme 01384 812337					
Yoga - mixed abilities	10	20/01/14	Mon	10:30-11:30	£25
St. Paul's Community Centre Kim Thompson-Jones 01384 812371					
Zumba tone	10	13/01/14	Mon	12:00-13:00	£27.50
Stourbridge Library Kim Thompson-Jones / Geri Nardiello 01384 812371					
Computers taster	3	13/01/14	Mon	13:00-15:00	£15
Computers taster	3	15/01/14	Wed	09:30-11:30	£15
Computer skills for e-mails	10	13/01/14	Mon	13:00-15:00	£52
Computer skills for e-mails	10	15/01/14	Wed	09:30-11:30	£52
Computer skills for word processing	10	13/01/14	Mon	13:00-15:00	£52
Computer skills for word processing	10	15/01/14	Wed	09:30-11:30	£52
Computer skills for the Internet	10	13/01/14	Mon	13:00-15:00	£52
Computer skills for the Internet	10	15/01/14	Wed	09:30-11:30	£52
The Savoy Centre Glen Ostins 01384 816471					
Sage Accounting - computer software	6	28/02/14	Fri	12:45-14:45	£26
Computers taster	3	14/01/14	Tue	13:00-15:00	£15
Book Keeping - an introduction	6	10/01/14	Fri	12:45-14:45	£26
Computer skills for e-mails	10	14/01/14	Tue	13:00-15:00	£52
Computer skills for word processing	10	14/01/14	Tue	13:00-15:00	£52
Computer skills for the Internet	10	14/01/14	Tue	13:00-15:00	£52
Computer skills	10	14/01/14	Tue	13:00-15:00	£52
Talbot Hotel Stourbridge Kim Thompson-Jones 01384 812371					
Creative Crafts - all Levels	4	22/01/14	Wed	13:00-15:00	£22
Water Colour Painting - all levels	5	13/01/14	Mon	10:30-13:30	£47
Windsor High School and Sixth Form Kath Glazzard 01384 816496					
ESOL - English for Speakers of Other Languages	10	13/01/14	Mon	09:10-11:10	Free
Woodside Community School and Children's Centre Kim Thompson-Jones 01384 812371					
ESOL - English for Speakers of Other Languages	10	14/01/14	Tue	12:30-14:30	£102
Mixed Crafts	5	15/01/14	Wed	13:00-15:00	£27
Aerobics - all levels	5	20/01/14	Mon	17:00-18:00	£14.50
Yemeni Centre Kath Glazzard 01384 816496					
ESOL for Men - English for Speakers of Other Languages	10	13/01/14	Mon	10:00-12:00	£102

artSPACE Artspace at 4 Birdcage Walk in Dudley offers a range of arts and crafts workshops - please call 07972 735210 for details.

Live4Less

The Live4Less course offers tips and practical advice about how to manage your money better. Learn about how to make savings on your household bills, cooking on a budget and how to improve your finances. The course lasts for 6 weeks with a 2 hour session every week. For details contact Keith Richards on 01384 812376

The Archives and Local History Centre

Fred Richings / Emma Balme 01384 812337

Adult and family learning courses are now available at the newly opened Archives and Local History Centre.

The new centre, which is located next to the Black Country Museum on the Tipton Road in Dudley, is the perfect place to start tracing your family history. To help beginners get started there is a new course starting in January called Family History - getting started. Other courses include women's history and World War 1.

The state-of-the-art building will also be home to the borough's historic collections including maps, newspapers, books, photographs, written records and census data dating as far back as the 12th century. For more information about The Archives call 01384 812770.

British Sign Language - taster session	1	13/02/14	Thu	09:30-12:30	£10
British Sign Language - taster session	1	13/02/14	Thu	12:30-3:00	£10
Digital Photography - analogue to digital	4	21/01/14	Tue	10:00-12:00	£20
Architectural Photography	3	25/02/14	Tue	10:00-12:00	£15
Family History - getting started	1	25/02/14	Tue	13:00-15:00	£5
Family History - who do you think you are?	6	04/03/14	Tue	13:00-15:00	£30
Creative Writing	6	27/01/14	Mon	18:00-20:00	£30
Watercolours - taster session	1	22/01/14	Wed	13:00-15:00	£10
Painting Local Scenes Using Watercolours	6	29/01/14	Wed	13:00-15:00	£40
Photography - Still Life	3	18/03/14	Tue	10:00-12:00	£15
Social Media - taster session	1	22/01/14	Wed	17:00-19:00	£5
Social Media for beginners	4	29/01/14	Wed	17:00-19:00	£20
Valentine Special - flower arranging	1	30/01/14	Thu	10:00-14:00	£20
Vintage Flowers - Mother's Day gifts	1	07/03/14	Fri	09:30-12:30	£20
Wedding Flower Arrangements	5	24/01/14	Fri	09:30-12:00	£20
Women's History - a taster session	1	21/01/14	Tue	13:00-14:30	£5
Women's History - an introduction	3	28/01/14	Tue	13:00-15:00	£15
Sewing - create a Downton Abbey costume	11	24/01/14	Fri	10:00-12:30	£60
Yoga for seniors - a taster session	1	21/01/14	Tue	14:45-15:45	£2.50
Yoga for seniors	6	28/01/14	Tue	14:45-15:45	£15
Creative Writing and World War 1	1	20/01/14	Mon	18:00-20:00	£5
History - World War 1 Commemoration	3	20/01/14	Mon	18:00-20:00	£15
Making a Fascinator	6	24/01/14	Fri	13:00-15:00	£35

Family Learning *price per family

Brierley Hill Neighbourhood Learning Centre

Kim Thompson-Jones / Geri Nardiello 01384 812371

Harry and the Bucketful of Dinosaurs - stories and crafts. 1 24/02/14 Tue 14:00-15:30 £3*

Dudley Wood Neighbourhood Learning Centre

Glen Ostins 01384 816471

Creative Families - music and crafts for kids 5 16/01/14 Thu 10:00-11:30 £17

Harry and the Bucketful of Dinosaurs - stories and crafts. 1 26/02/14 Thu 11:00-12:30 £3*

Castle & Priory Neighbourhood Learning Centre

Emma Balme / Fred Richings 01384 812337

Harry and the Bucketful of Dinosaurs - stories and crafts. 1 23/02/14 Mon 14:00-15:30 £3*

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Glen Ostins 01384 816471

Work clubs

We offer support at various Work Clubs for those seeking to gain employment. This includes support with CV writing, job search, interview techniques and universal job match.

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www.dudley.gov.uk/adultlearning
Adult and Community Learning 01384 818143

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CLUB NEWS

**Six lucky
winners in
free raffle**

K'FORD TG

KINGSWINFORD Guild did not meet in the Community centre in December. Instead they visited The Lodge in Dudley and enjoyed a lavish Christmas Luncheon.

There was no formal business, but members were reminded of two national events, in April and in June which may appeal to them.

A box was circulated, so that members who wished to do so could make a charity donation instead of sending cards. However, some people did distribute cards.

There was a free raffle and the six prize winners were Ena Baker, Enid Fennell, Ann Rogers, Kath Turner, Margaret Farmer and Sylvia Taylor.

**Tribute to
sum raised**

K'FORD POPPY APPEAL

ORGANISERS of the Kingswinford Poppy Appeal have thanked the public for their generosity after £35,489.34 was raised.

Organiser Bob Townsend paid tribute to those who had given their time and money to the cause.

He also thanked the participants in the annual sponsored Poppy Walk, whose ages ranged from three years old to some who were in their 70s.

**Speaker brings the
spirit of Christmas**



Guest speaker Patricia Boyd and President Parkash at the December meeting

TWO guests attending the December meeting were welcomed by president Parkash.

Speaker was Patricia Boyd, who brought the spirit of Christmas past and present alive with an entertaining talk interspersed with poems, facts and verse from Victorian Christmas times to the present day. The vote of thanks was given by Audrey Coates.

This was followed by members donating food and miscellaneous items for The Well - Wolverhampton's Food Bank.

Participation began in October 2012, when it was agreed that the club would support by collecting food and delivering to the warehouse. To now, some 455kg of food

WOLVERHAMPTON SOROPTIMISTS

and items has been given as a way of providing supplies to local people in need.

For many years at Christmas, the club has collected for The Church of the Good Shepherd Trust who this year had requested ring can pull-food items and men's clothing, particularly underwear.

Coupled with the above, presents are always collected for The Haven Charity to enable children and parents to enjoy a safer Christmas.

Membership fees to rise

WORDSLEY M TG

and at The Holly Bush, Penn on February 3.

Speaker Ken Gilks gave a humorous 'Odes of Life and Laughter' repartee with memories of his childhood. Pat Hadley gave the vote of

thanks. The bring and share refreshments were then served.

The next guild meeting is on Monday February 17 when there will be a quiz and membership renewal.

Guild membership will be raised by £1 with a £1 entrance at each meeting.

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Dine and Dance from £149.⁹⁵

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For both breaks the price includes a theatre ticket, overnight stay in a four-star outer London hotel, with full English breakfast (plus dinner for Dine and Dance options). Pick ups offered are Dudley, Shrewsbury, Telford, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

Rail inclusive breaks – Two or three days

Departures most weekends

Saturday Night Theatre from £149.⁹⁵

Catch the Theatre Express and enjoy a super two-day weekend break in the capital. There's a choice of London hotels and your ticket is for a Saturday evening performance. Rail travel is standard class with the option to upgrade. Departs Saturday morning/early afternoon from Birmingham New Street, Shrewsbury, Stafford or Wolverhampton, returning on the Sunday afternoon/early evening to give plenty of free time for shopping and sightseeing.

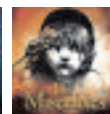
Theatre Showstopper from £199.⁹⁵

This popular theatre package to the West End departs from Birmingham New Street, Shrewsbury, Stafford or Wolverhampton on the Friday morning returning on the Sunday afternoon/early evening. Standard class travel is included with the option to upgrade. Two nights stay at a four-star London hotel of your choice (hotel supplements may apply) and a top priced ticket for a Friday evening performance.

*The "from" price and price bands vary for each show – see brochure for details.

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Zoo is being restored to its former glory



Chief executive Peter Suddock takes a look at refurbishment standing on the main entrance roof at Dudley Zoological Gardens

IT HAS been a familiar sight to generations of visitors passing through the turnstiles at Dudley Zoo. Now the iconic wave entrance at the Castle Hill attraction is being carefully restored to ensure it welcomes many more families for years to come.

The eye-catching building is one of two of the zoo's historic Tecton structures, which were first constructed more than 70 years ago, using pre-stressed concrete – a pioneering system at the time.

And now staff are carrying on the tradition with ground-breaking work to carry out repairs on two of these famous structures – the first time this has been done with concrete buildings.

Status

The Tecton structures date back to the mid-1930s when architects were able to mould the concrete to create attractive enclosures to fit in with the landscape and the steep slopes of the Castle Hill site.

Today the zoo has the world's largest single collection of Tecton buildings and in 2009 all 12 structures received World Monuments Fund status, alongside Machu Picchu and the Taj Mahal.

The wave entrance and the Safari Shop are among four that are being renovated thanks to cash from part of a wider £1.15 million lottery-funded programme.

Work began in September and has seen the zoo join forces with history experts to ensure accurate materials and techniques are used.

Members of the 20th Century Society have helped the attraction find the exact concrete formula used to make the buildings so it can be recreated for the restoration.

Special report by Heather Large

Meanwhile, chief executive of what is officially called Dudley Zoological Gardens, Peter Suddock has also attended a four-day course in Sussex on concrete mixing and building repair to understand the work that is involved.

He said: "It's going really well. We started at the end of September with the aim of getting the concrete repairs done before Christmas. We're looking on target. We needed to get them done before it gets frosty as it's too cold then to work on the concrete."

During the work staff have also discovered the original paint scheme for both the shop and entrance – terracotta red and a light sky blue, which they are looking to recreate.

"It's looking really brilliant. We're discovering things we didn't know about," Mr Suddock said. "We found the original slab floor in the shop and we've been looking at how to make it fit for modern use."

Windows, glass and doors will be installed in the shop before it is fitted out ready to welcome visitors by Easter.

During the work, which has seen the zoo run an apprentice-training scheme with Dudley College, the shop's contents and sign have been relocated to a temporary site next to the chairlift.

The turnstiles will be re-fitted in the wave entrance with the concrete given a lick of paint.

In March work will start on the other two Tecton structures due to be refurbished – the bear ravine and kiosk 1.

The restoration project, which also included repairing and re-opening the chairlift last year, is being funded by the zoo, which will invest £600,000 on a retail complex, Tecton interpretation centre and upgrading toilets and food outlets. New service roads are also being constructed.



Refurbishment work is under way at the shop at Dudley Zoo



The iconic turnstile entrance at the zoo is due to get a revamp



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Fairy tale wedding for couple



Happy ever after for Amanda Billington and Nathan Gibbs, alias Shrek and Fiona

IT WAS a fairytale wedding inspired by animated movie Shrek but instead of a swamp for their nuptials, a couple the green-skinned couple picked Dudley's Priory Hall.

Kingswinford couple, 39-year-old Nathan Gibbs, and 44-year-old Amanda Billington, tied the knot on Saturday dressed up as ogre Shrek and his Princess Fiona, in a special ceremony at the Grade I-listed registration office, all in aid of charity, in which guests also donated fancy dress.

The couple raised money for Cancer

Research UK by asking guests to donate to the charity rather than give presents. They think the fundraising may top £1,800.

Former bricklayer Nathan, who runs ironing business The Iron Maidens with Amanda, said they chose to support Cancer Research UK because seven customers had been hit by the disease.

Nathan added: "After we made this decision my sister was diagnosed with breast cancer, which made our choice even more poignant."

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14

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NEWS

Maternity staff praised by chief for high score

THE chief executive of Dudley's hospital trust has praised the dedication of maternity staff after they received high marks in a national survey of care.

Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust scored a total of 171.1 out of 200 in the CQC survey, putting it among the best-performing trusts in the area.

The survey saw women asked to give their views on their experience of maternity care. They were asked a series of different questions covering 20 topics, including communication with patients and partners, and compassion shown by staff. These were then compiled into three different sections: labour and birth, staff and care in hospital after the birth.

Best

The high scores put the Dudley among the best-performing trusts in the area. Trust chief executive Paula Clark said: "We are delighted by the Trust's performance in the CQC's survey of maternity services."

"We always strive to offer the best possible care to our mums-to-be and these excellent results are a testament to the dedication and hard work of all our maternity staff."

"We are especially pleased that we scored 8.3 out of 10 for the care we provide to our new mums after birth, placing us amongst the best performing trusts for this area."

"Our maternity unit continues to be extremely

by Heather Large

popular with mum-to-be, and over the past few years we have invested lots of time and money into further improving our maternity services, both in hospital and out in the community."

In April the Dudley Group received a £41,000 Government grant to revamp the Midwife Led Unit (MLU) at Russells Hall.

The cash was spent creating a 'homely' setting for mothers-to-be. It is offered to women, who are considered low risk, as an alternative to home birth.

Active birth classes are offered to help women familiarise themselves with the hospital's labour and birth equipment to help them feel less anxious about giving birth.

Money has also been invested in extra equipment which helps to keep women comfortable and also upright and mobile during labour.

The hospital's maternity department received the cash as part of a nationwide £25 million Department of Health scheme to help improve maternity facilities. It was one of 100 units to be given the funds to make women and their partners more comfortable during childbirths.

Horses left on reserves to be rounded up and impounded

Oh yes it is a big panto surprise



School panto stars Ann Shackleton, front, with John Tipper, Ian Brennan, Emma Smith, Hayley Walker and Janine Sargent

TEACHERS at a primary school staged an elaborate ruse - rehearsing for a surprise panto performance in secret when they were telling children they had staff meetings.

The show went on at Timbertree Primary School, Cradley Heath. Governors, some of them councillors, even got in on the act - all to the shock of pupils in the audience.

Headteacher Hayley Walker said the staff managed to fit in six practice sessions before the big event - but admit-

ted there was still 'a fair bit of ad-libbing'. Mrs Walker was one of the ugly sisters alongside her deputy Mrs Janine Sargent.

Mrs Walker said: "The children loved it. When we came in there was a few minutes then we could hear whispering as they were saying that's Mrs Walker; that's Mrs Sargent. It went brilliantly well."

Councillors Ann Shackleton and John Tipper, both school governors, also joined in the fun as the fairy godmother

and Baron Hard-up respectively. Mrs Walker added: "The fairy godmother was great because Ann is the chair of governors and looks after us all. John would say he was perfect for the role because as a councillor, he'd say the council's always hard-up."

Year 4 teacher Ian Brennan played Prince Leroy of Timbertree, normally known as Prince Charming, while Year 6 teacher Emma Smith secured the leading role of Cinderella.

HORSES grazing on nature reserves in Dudley borough face being impounded after a warning was sent out from council bosses.

Dudley Council has already spent almost £150,000 rounding up horses over the past two financial years.

Now a council-appointed land enforcement firm called Rosendales has put up new signs threatening to impound horses which were stray or tethered to posts on Buckpool Nature Reserve in Brockmoor.

Hamidah Huse, aged 65, of Leys Road, said since the signage had been put up she had alerted the owners of two horses, who had removed their animals.

But, before Christmas, eight still remained, including a family of two horses and a nine-month-old foal.

All the animals are untethered and are roaming freely in the nature reserve. The retired artist said: "I think the family have been in the reserve for such a long time they should be left alone - they are used to living in the wild and can cope with it."

She added: "But I understand why the other horses should be taken away, they have been left abandoned overnight and require help."

Dudley Council has long faced a battle dealing with horses grazing on the council-owned reserves, including Fens Pool. It spent £75,484 on rounding up horses in 2011-12, and then £72,620 in 2012-13.

Officers regularly receive calls from members of the public concerned about the welfare of the animals.



Councillor Tracy Wood

Councillor Tracy Wood, cabinet member for environment and culture, said: "Land such as Fens Pool and Buckpool are not designated by the council as grazing land for horses so irresponsible horse owners who allow their animals to roam free are doing so illegally."

"We have a long-standing, tried and tested arrangement with a private enforcement agency which posts warning notices stating that stray and illegally grazing horses may be impounded in targeted actions at appropriate times."

She added that the council also worked closely with the RSPCA and had carried out a horse passporting exercise with the charity at Fens Pool earlier this year.

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JOANNA 34, in need of tlc, wine, dining being treated like the princess I am, looking for sugar daddy, that someone special to love me. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408869

MARIA gorgeous outgoing bbw 27, good fun, caring, romantic, looking for that special someone to share life with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408733

KIM attractive single lady new to area looking for meet new friends and maybe a new love interest. I have many hobbies and am interesting to know, pls call me. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408489

TAYLOR attractive very busty curvy black female looking for fun times with open-minded male who is also looking for fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408311

48YR old attractive female seeking local fun maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403947

TRACY slim dark haired beauty, petite, hardworking, career, enjoys dancing nights out, WLTm loving male who can make me laugh for an adult relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409419

SHARON very attractive British black lady, sexy size 6 looking for white male to fall in love with. Beautiful people can be lonely too. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409263

SAM, 35yrs, own business, sexy, loves dressing up and married, seeks discreet man for casual meetings. Can travel anywhere. ACA. Tel No: 0905 002 1961 Box No: 408297

MID naughty torties female looking fun, thrills and discreet meets, give me a call, you won't be disappointed. Any age with own accommodation. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409109

ANITA very attractive black female, seeking mature white/Asian man to enjoy uncomplicated relationship with no ties. Any age, pls contact me. I'm very lonely. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408505

ANNA, busty mature lady seeks no strings discreet meetings with male any age or location. Tel No: 0905 002 1952 Box No: 36019

HI I'm Jo, first time, newly divorced perfect size 10, blonde, attractive, tactile and looking to fall in love again. Age unimportant, dad welcome. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409089

SUSIE 32yr old nurse who likes cosy nights in with a good bottle of wine and spending quality times with great company, if you feel the same pls get in touch. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408877

BABS 27yrs slender with dark haired passionate Italian who loves to dance, eat out, looking for nice n/s male to spend quality adult time with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407943

BUBBLY 60 plus lady, slim, fair hair, comfy in jeans and leather jacket, seeks similar male for friendship etc. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408859

ABBA girl blonde lookalike, size 16, attractive, bubbly, OHAC, seeking soulful, refined, handsome guy with full head of hair, 5ft 9ins plus, professional and more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409151

NEETA Black beauty, classy, intelligent 27yrs, loves to enjoy life, have lots of fun and be spoilt, give me a call. Any age, looks and status. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409101

SUSIE, seeks fifty shades of grey with guy any age but must be discreet, call and I will explain why. Tel No: 0905 002 1953 Box No: 407321

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CHRIS blue eyed blonde single female, lots of interests, loves travel, beach, nights in/out, looking for mature sincere gent for good times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407615

ATTRACTIVE female, young 49, 5ft 7ins, blonde hair, blue eyes, slim, genuine, lively, easygoing, GSOH, seeks tall, handsome male, 40-50 for fun times, friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406135

BETHANY 25yr old blonde, slim size 10 with great personality, looking for nice guy to share my life with, single dad welcome. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408253

HI I'm Pam, cuddly, attractive, self-sufficient, employed, looking for similar young looking, sincere male for hopeful relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407933

FEMALE many interests, seeks male, 40-55 for LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408537

68YR old lady, likes gardening, meals out, days out, looking for sincere gent to share time with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408413

JENNY single independent attractive lady, tall and leggy, sensual and looking for very special male friend. Only genuine callers pls. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408285

28YR old female, seeking male with GSOH for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408639

MIXED raced lady, 34, widely travelled, seeking gent, 30-40 for romance. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408429

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ANNABELLA board attractive 30 something nurse wanting healing hands for no strings fun. No TLC required. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407449

JANE attractive, seeking male for fun and friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403807

LITTLE bit nice and definitely a little bit naughty! Imaginative curvy blonde seeks male for kisses and cuddles. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 363428

62YR old female, widowed, small, slim, attractive, kind, outgoing, likes meals out, dancing, holidays, nights in, seeking professional gent. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 394106

CURVY Irish female 35yrs looking for fun, frolics, weekends away and lots of excitement with reliable male, discretion assured. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407603

SLIM active lady, 60's, N/S, seeks honest, kind gent, 57-62 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407693

CAROL 36, looking for older experienced gent 50-70yrs for fun times only, discretion assured and expected. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 401853

SUE attractive lonely brunette who loves eyes in/out, music, WLTm someone sincere to love and get close to, why not give me a call? Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407021

WHERE have all the genuine men gone? Sue single female who enjoys nights in/out, music, seeks sincere male to enjoy good times and get close to. Pls ring. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407025

PAULA 38 single mum with OHAC, attractive big eyes, size 14, seeking well built male with GSOH and honest/reliable disposition, looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407029

MEDIUM build female, 66, widow, 5ft 5ins, likes walks, reading, holidays, seeks sincere male. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407003

HI I am Linda a lonely petite mature lady looking for nice caring male up to 65yrs who also has lots of love to give for hopeful relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406715

ANITA petite 33yr old tanned, toned sexy size 10 female with very high drive and lots of energy looking for similar man for adult no stings fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406835

CARING female, likes Indian rock music, concerts, cinema, seeks North Staffs male, 40-55 for friendship/relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406757

LINDA bored housewife wanting to spice things up a bit looking for clean well mannered professional for discreet adult meets. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406705

GOOD looking professional female, 51, enjoys arts, wine/dining, sight seeing, country walks, seeks special male to enjoy great fun with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406765

LIZ 42, black, divorced, seeking male, 44-54 for kind, sincere, honest, open relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409049

SUE 40's female who enjoys evenings in/out looking for someone to have some fun and hopefully get close to, go on, give me a ring. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407019

NICKY loving caring gorgeous fun young lady who loves swimming, dancing and lots more, seeking male for text chats and fun times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407459

BLACK female, 45, seeking older gent, 60 plus who knows how to look after a lady. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407787

PAM 71, feels younger, lots to give, socialising, theatre, country walks, charity work, seeking male to share interests with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407851

LOVING caring young 67yr old female, 5ft 2ins, slim, 12, brown hair, likes meals out, GSOH, smoker, seeks slim, smart male with GSOH. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 364651

MANDY divorced independent 48yr old single mum, confident, bubbly and social, looking for male companion to share good times and to be there for each other. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407469

NICKY 26 fun single female who has been on her own far too long desperately seeking her Prince Charming, must be tactile and possess the ability to fall in love. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407485

LYN slim size 10, 5ft 9ins, attractive with GSOH, OHAC, employed, WLTm genuine guy who is also looking to put some fun back into life. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407195

DEBS 37yr old professional, outgoing, bubbly, seeking genuine man for good times in/out and just see where it leads. Single dad welcome. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407039

BLONDE blue eyed 72yr old widow, GSOH, young at heart, seeks honest, caring gent of similar age for holidays, weekends away and happy times, friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407113

MICHELLE lonely singleton, fit/sleender, passionate, easy-going seeks male to cook for and generally spill rotten in exchange for great companionship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407501

HEATHER larger than life, cuddly built lady, scrubs up pretty well, employed, OHAC, GSOH, looking for good times with willing male, fun times guaranteed. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407307

TRACY 35yr old blonde petite single mum, WLTm tall male for nights out, text chats and hopefully IRL. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407215

CHRISTINA 38 very pretty petite trainee nurse looking for N/S male companionship to enjoy meals/drinks out, leading to more maybe. Age/looks and status unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 405243

DONNA 42yrs young separated female who is ready to start dating again, bubbly, attractive, blonde and raring to get going, come on don't keep me waiting! Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406341

SINGLE cuddly female, 5ft 6ins, green eyes, seeks male, 40-50 for fun and more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406015

SHELLEY 48, 5ft 5ins, brunette, seeking discreet relationship with male 48-52 for friendship/companionship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 405795

PAT 67, attractive, likes reading, holidays, seeking female, 65-72 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 405985

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CARLA 41, brown hair/eyes, 5ft 2ins, loving, seeking male who likes walks, cinema and romantic meals. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 396127

ATTRACTIVE lady, GSOH, slim, dark hair, 50's, likes walks, films, art, meals out, seeks male with GSOH and similar interests for friendship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399245

BLONDE tanned female, trendy, 46, GSOH, likes walks, pubs, nights in, seeks male. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 384652

GAIL 52, blonde hair, 5ft 2ins, likes nights out, seeks N/S male, 50-60 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 402041

JANE 48yrs West Midlands, likes meals out, cinema, theatre, looking for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403949

BLACK female 32yrs, 38dd, very curvy, sensual and looking for discreet fun with no strings or complications, any age, looks or status. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406282

MARIA petite curvy brunette, into keep fit, running, beauty, looking for nice genuine tall N/S guy with no ties for fun adult companionship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 405099

SHAZ 33 easygoing voluptuous black female with lovely smile and personality to match, loves music, keeping fit and looking good, WLTm appreciative guy Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404819

SENSUAL cuddly 32yr old professional looking for similar minded discreet male up to 40yrs for 1-2-1 fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404023

BLONDE attractive educated lady 50, young minded, seeks professional tall male, 45-55 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 391818

TINA fun loving single mum who enjoys most things in life, seeking happy guy with GSOH for meals in, dates out, possible romance and adult companionship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403567

WOMAN 55yrs old, N/S, size 14, likes animals, nature, reading, TV, quiet life, seeks man 45-55, N/S for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404447

WIDOW young hearted 70's, N/S, likes reading, concerts, gardening, meals out, WLTm younger gentleman with similar interests. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404177

ELIZABETH 33, curvy attractive blonde, likes walking, socialising, meals out, entertaining, WLTm well educated nice male 50-60's for nice times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403937

CAROLINE attractive, kind, caring, 43, seeking kind, caring male for LTR, 45-50. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 396837

DEBBIE sexy size 14, fun, outgoing, discreet, looking for fun times only with male over 40yrs, call to find out more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 398759

NICKY lonely 39yr old single mum looking for adult companionship and strictly no strings fun. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399189

SARAH 23, attractive, brunette, slim, looking for male for LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 392979

GRACE Jones lookalike, black lady, 53, 5ft 11ins, OHAC, WLTm male, 45-65, 6ft plus for relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397681

RETired lady, seeks gent for friendship and outings, holidays etc. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 392936

GENUINE good looking male, 39, WLTm genuine, pretty female, 24-42 for fun and friendship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407753

SHY 60yr old male, seeks genuine female for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407847

32YR old slim, dark haired, adventurous, creative, likes music, cycling and photography, seeks female for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 352753

JEFF 60's, 6ft 2ins, fit, seeking lady, mid 50-60's for friendship/relationship, nights in/out and good times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407811

ROMANCE wanted in Nuneaton. 5ft 10ins, medium build male, 41, seeking a relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406683

DAVE genuine guy, 6ft, black hair, blue eyes, medium build, likes sports, gardening, music, seeks female with GSOH and genuine. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 388372

TONY 55, dark hair, 6ft, confident, outgoing, seeks mature, attractive female, 68 plus, genuine ad. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408989

FUN loving male, 47, lots to give, looking for genuine lady for LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409159

GENT 55, slightly mad, but not bad, will make you glad you answered his ad! Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408973

TALL intelligent, professional fit guy, 50's, athletic, seeks good natured, intelligent female, 50-57 for friendship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408991

LONELY male, 55, seeks Indian/Jamaican female, 25 plus for sincere relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408957

ATTRACTIVE male, 55, seeks older female, 50-70 for close, adult fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397189

MARK 44, 6ft, dark hair, businessman, interesting, seeking sporty female for meals out, day trips, country walks etc. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408571

FUN loving male, 5ft 10ins, slim, GSOH, seeks mature female, 50-65 for meals out and daytime relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408185

JIMMY 53 good looking, fit, genuine, honest, very loving and looking for the same a woman. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397157

JOHN 58, 5ft 8ins, OHAC, GSOH, seeks lady, 46-55, likes meals out and in. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403273

BROADMINDED 42yr old male, GSOH, caring, loving good personality seeks female for fun friendship, relationship and adult fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404623

MATURE male, lonely, no ties, attractive, likes TV, reading, walks, holidays, meals out, seeks attractive, smart female, 65-72 to share simple things in life. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408183

MAURICE Shropshire farmer, 43, seeks farming lady of any age to share the good times in life with view to LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 374021

YOUNG looking 50's male, seeking female for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408177

MALE 58, good looking, placid, seeks honest, loyal, caring female with view to becoming soul mates. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400313

SINGLE male, youthful, serene, seeks similar down to earth non materialistic female to become everlasting soul mates. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407711

CHRIS divorced, 55, smoker, seeks female, 30-45 for lasting relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407715

TIM easygoing honest male, discreet, uninhibited, seeks similar non conformist averagely attractive, N/S female up to 65. Notts. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 375065

GENT 48, youthful outlook, likes countryside, keep fit, karaoke, seeks soul mate for fun times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408411

MATURE land owner, GSOH, youthful outlook, likes countryside, socialising, history, seeks lady who appreciates good food/conversation with view to relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408417



PAUL 46, brown/blond hair, 6ft, slim, single dad, genuine, down to earth, fun loving, kind, caring, likes most things seeking female for love. Tel

What's On! Halesowen

Festive fun with Cerys

Cerys Matthews
Town Hall, Birmingham
THERE are two words which sum up a Cerys Matthews show, great fun. The Welsh singer/songwriter and BBC Radio 6 presenter rarely stops talking, with the exception of when she is singing but she is such an enthusiastic and engaging character.

She opened the first of her two sets on the banjo with a Woody Guthrie song, 'Who's Gonna Shoe Your Pretty Little Feet?', Matthews' valley spring tones filled the Town Hall with a haunting version of the tune.

Most of her songs have a lengthy introduction and she openly boasted that the longest preamble she has done to date was at the nearby Glee Club, where she chatted for 21 minutes between songs.

When she finally got around to singing 'Johnny Come Lately', from her Catatonia days, there was more than a hint of Kate Bush about her tones.

A Welsh language song 'Moliannwn' came from her Hulla Baloo album which is totally in Welsh.

She treated the audience to Chardonnay, from her Cockatoo album, followed by a great version of 'Jingle Bells' and a traditional 'Deck The Halls' followed by a funky version of 'Ding Dong Merrily on High', again with the audience brought in to provide vocal support.

Danny Farragher

Gok glitz and giggles too in pantomime makeover

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Birmingham Hippodrome

MAKING his panto debut in Birmingham, fashion guru Gok Wan should be renamed Gok the giggler as he is obviously enjoying his pantomime makeover as much as the audience.

Judging by his vocal performance, a singing career is probably off the agenda but for glitz, glamour and celebrity wow factor, not to mention outfits that look like they've been designed for Ming the Merciless, Gok as the Man in the Mirror is most definitely on style.

Dragon

But he is only part of the ensemble that make Brume spectacular panto a surefire hit with lots of singing, dancing, slapstick and naughty humour – plus a fearsome flying dragon that looks more than capable of wolfing down seven dwarves and probably a hobbit too.

Gok not the only first timer in panto land, song and dance man Gary Wilmott shows there's nothing like a Dame to raise the fun factor. As Nora Crumple, the castle cook, he is the focus for some of the funniest routines and also brings a tear to the eye with a charming song about motherhood.

As Snow White, Over The Rainbow winner Danielle Hope, who has now played both Dorothy and Epoxide in the West End, is an excellent singer with the kind of smile that lights up a room and is dressed just like her animated Disney predecessor.

Despite this being her first panto too, Miss Hope could hold her own with showbiz and soap stalwart

Review by Leon Burakowski

John Partridge who, as Prince John, gives 100 per cent in enthusiasm and energy.

This show also boasts two funny-men with ventriloquist and comic Paul Zerline and Brian Conley-lookalike Matt Slack as brothers Muddles and Oddson.

Or maybe that should be three, because Zerline puppet Sam seems to have a life of his own, despite a technical hitch on press night that rubbed a little magic off the puppet's big moment.

Completing the package is former The Colbys and Dynasty star Stephanie Beacham as a superbly hissing wicked queen – important enough to have Gok as her personal style consultant – and the magnificent seven themselves. The dwarves are not played by the height-challenged but seven actors in ingenious, hilarious costumes that must leave them with very sore knees.

All in all, this year's Hippodrome panto is like a Gok makeover – fabulous – and it continues until February 2.



Wicked Queen Sadista (Stephanie Beacham) puts a spell on Oddjob (Matt Slack) in Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs at Birmingham Hippodrome



Gok Wan as The Man in the Mirror



Danielle Hope as Snow White

Music from around world

Magical Christmas Tree Show, Newhampton Folk Club
IF YOU are bold enough to sing House of the Rising Sun to the tune of Little Town of Bethlehem and Rock Around the Clock in mediaeval Middle English then, if only for novelty value, you are worth listening to.

The one thing you can say about the trio Chris Parkinson, Pete Morton and Emily Sanders, who was standing in for the ill Maggie Boyle, is their festive may not be traditional but it's damn good entertainment. They opened with The Mountain Road and Christmas Eve with Parkinson on melodeon, Morton guitar and Sanders on fiddle. Right from the off, they had come to have a good time.

The magical Christmas tree of the title was a rather pathetic looking specimen but it was really only there to let the audience pick scrolls from the branches which had instructions for the group. One such was for music from around the world. Parkinson opened with a Moldova tune on accordion then Morton took over singing Malaika, which means angel in Swahili, and Sanders played a gorgeous version of Hava Nagila on fiddle.

Sanders put on clogs to give a traditional dance to the tune of Byker Hill. Things turned surreal as Morton picked up a tune which started as Greensleeves but moved into the Middle Ages version of Rock Around the Clock. You have to hear it to really appreciate it. This was the last show of 2013 for the folk club but thankfully it will be back later this year.

DF

PUZZLER PAGE SOLUTIONS

The puzzle page was not carried for the weeks of December 19 and December 26. So that our readers can check their answers we have listed below the solutions to the puzzle page carried on December 12 (No 251).

CROSSWORD

CRYPTIC: Across: 1 Marksmanship; 7 Train; 8 Chair; 9 Run; 10 Malingers; 11 Accent; 12 Parade; 15 Martially; 17 Tea; 18 Nudge; 19 Tuber; 21 Considerable. Down: 1 Maltreatment; 2 Spa; 3 Annals; 4 Secondary; 5 Irate; 6 Cross-examine; 7 Tonic; 10 Manliness; 13 Aster; 14 Slated; 16 Radio; 20 Bar. QUICK: Across: 1 Confidential; 7 Allow; 8 Bear; 9 Tot; 10 Charlatan; 11 Recent; 12 Stream; 15 Adjourned; 17 Ass; 18 Drift; 19 Tacit; 21 Reprehension. Down: 1 Countermands; 2 Ill; 3 Enwrap; 4 Tabulated; 5 Avert; 6 Transmission; 7 Antic; 10 Conductor; 13 Exact; 14 Snatch; 16 Juice; 20 Can.

SUDOKU

6	2	8	3	5	7	4	9	1
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CODEWORD

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
N	D	Y	C	Z	F	E	O	P	M	B	A	Q
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
T	U	R	S	V	K	X	L	I	G	J	W	H

● For this week's puzzler turn to Page 27

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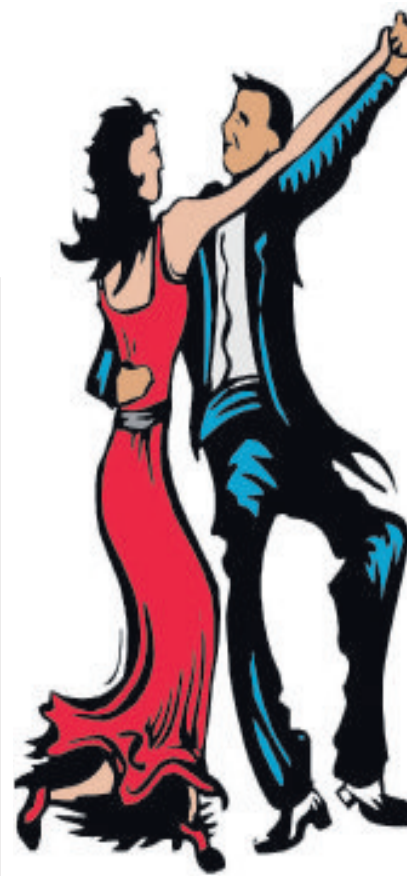
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What's On!

SATURDAY'S TV 4.01.14

Listings supplied by Press Association

CHOICE



Catherine Tate

Catherine Tate's Nan
BBC1, 9.30pm

It's been a while since we saw Catherine Tate heading up her own series. Not that she hasn't been busy; in recent years she's had a stint as a Doctor Who companion, been a regular in the American version of The Office and starred alongside David Williams in Big School. But now she's about to resurrect one of the comedy characters who helped to make her name – Joanie Taylor, better known as Nan. Her grandson Jamie is in Africa, so to lend her a hand she's got a new friend, Alice, who doesn't know what she's letting herself in for...

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Food & Drink. (R) **12.00** Football Focus. **12.45** Saturday Sportsday. **1.00** BBC News; Regional News; Weather. **1.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.45** Escape to the Country. (R) **2.30** Live Darts: BDO World Championships. Coverage of the opening day of the tournament. **4.30** Final Score. **5.10** Frozen Planet. (R) **6.10** BBC News; Regional News; Weather. **6.30** **Celebrity Mastermind**. With Hal Crutenden, Clare Perkins, Sophie Hosking and Huw Stephens. **7.00** **Pointless Celebrities**. Featuring actors from Grange Hill, Waterloo Road and The Demon Headmaster. **7.50** **The National Lottery: Who Dares Wins**. New series. Nick Knowles hosts the game show in which two pairs of strangers compete by listing as much as they know about given subjects. Including the Lotto and Thunderball draws. **8.40** **Casualty**. Fletch witnesses an explosion at a bar and realises the man who accused him of assault is trapped inside the building. **9.30** **Catherine Tate's Nan**. The character returns in a one-off comedy special. **10.05** BBC News; Weather. **10.25** **Film: Little Fockers**. (2010) Premiere. Comedy sequel, starring Ben Stiller and Robert De Niro; National Lottery Update. **11.55** **Film: Rembrandt & Cigarettes**. (2005) Musical drama, starring James Gandolfini. **1.35** Weatherview. **1.40** BBC News.

BBC2

6.05 **Film: My Fake Fiance**. (2009) **7.30** **Film: Stick It**. (2006) **9.10** Life on Earth. (R) **10.05** Life on Earth. (R) **11.00** Fred Dibnah's Made in Britain. (R) **11.30** Great British Railway Journeys. (R) **12.00** Paul Hollywood's Pies & Puds. (R) **12.45** Paul Hollywood's Pies & Puds. (R) **1.30** **Film: The Horse Whisperer**. (1998) **4.10** Coast. **4.30** Live Darts: BDO World Championships. Further coverage of the opening day of the tournament. **5.30** James May's Toy Stories. The Motorcycle Diary. Building a motorbike and sidecar entirely out of Meccano. (R) **6.30** **Flog It!** Valuing items in Malvern, Worcestershire. (R) **7.30** **Dad's Army**. Godfrey is accused of cowardice. (R) **8.00** **Penelope & Wise: Leading Ladies**. Penelope Keith presents a compilation of highlights from the comedy duo's shows featuring appearances by female stars of stage and screen. (R) **9.00** **Dave Allen: God's Own Comedian**. A look at the life, career and legacy of the Irish comedy writer and performer, featuring interviews with family and friends and rare archive material. (R) **10.00** **Dave Allen: The Immaculate Selection**. Memorial routines by the comedian. **11.00** **Dave Allen in Search of the English Eccentric**. Documentary, first shown in 1974. (R) **11.55** **Darts: BDO World Championships**. Action from the opening day at the Lakeside Country Club. **12.45** Darts Extra. **2.45** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Pat & Stan. **6.10** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.15** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.25** Dino Dan. (R) **6.40** Dino Dan. (R) **6.50** Animals. (R) **6.55** Animals. (R) **7.05** Animals. (R) **7.15** Sooty. (R) **7.25** Sooty. (R) **7.40** Almost Naked Animals. (R) **7.50** Almost Naked Animals. (R) **8.05** Horrid Henry. (R) **8.15** Horrid Henry. (R) **8.30** Victorious. **9.00** Deadtime Stories. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Dinner Date. (R) **10.25** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **11.25** ITV News; Weather. **11.35** The Chase. (R) **12.40** Midsomer Murders. (R) **2.45** Show Me the Telly. (R) **3.45** You've Been Framed! Featuring golfing programme. **4.15** Regional Programme; Weather. **4.30** ITV News; Weather. **4.45** Live FA Cup Football. Arsenal v Tottenham Hotspur (Kick-off 5.15pm). Coverage of the third-round encounter at the Emirates Stadium, as the north London rivals meet in an eye-catching tie. **7.20** **Splash!** New series. Vernon Kay, Gabby Logan and Tom Daley return with the celebrity diving contest. **8.50** **Take Me Out**. New series. An entrepreneur, a daredevil and a student take part. **9.50** **The Jonathan Ross Show**. New series. The host of celebrity subjects another batch of celebrity guests to no-holds-barred questioning. **10.50** ITV News; Weather. **11.05** **FA Cup Football Highlights**. Action from the third round, with fixtures including Arsenal v Tottenham Hotspur, Wigan Athletic v Milton Keynes Dons and Macclesfield Town v Sheffield Wednesday. **12.35** Jackpot247. **3.00** Ladette to Lady: Australia. (R) **3.45** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.00 The Treacle People. (R) **6.10** Little Wolf's Book of Badness. (R) **6.35** **Film: Arctic Tale**. (2007) **8.00** The Morning Line. **9.00** The American Football Show. **10.00** How I Met Your Mother. (R) **10.30** How I Met Your Mother. (R) **11.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.00** The Simpsons. (R) **12.30** Jamie's Festive Feast. (R) **1.30** Channel 4 Racing. **4.00** Come Dine with Me. (R) **4.30** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.00** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.35** Come Dine with Me. (R) **6.05** **Come Dine with Me**. Jane Welch hosts the final dinner party in west London. (R) **6.35** **Channel 4 News**. **7.00** **Speed with Guy Martin**. The motorcycle racer takes part in four adrenaline-fuelled challenges, beginning with an attempt to break the British record for outright speed on a bicycle. (R) **8.00** **New Secrets of the Terracotta Warriors – Secret History**. Recent discoveries about China's Terracotta Army, an extraordinary collection of ceramic sculptures unearthed in 1974 and dating back more than 2,000 years. (R) **9.00** **Film: Robin Hood**. (2010) An archer returning from the crusades faces a plot by a traitorous knight to aid a French conquest of England. Adventure, with Russell Crowe and Kate Blanchett. **11.45** **Charlie Brooker's How Videogames Changed the World**. The broadcaster delves into the history of the games industry. (R) **1.40** Fresh Meat. (R) **2.25** Hollywoods. (R) **4.30** Suburgatory. **4.50** 90210. **5.35** Deal or No Deal. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.00** Power Rangers: Megaforce. **10.35** Sluggerra. **11.00** Jungle Babies: Tarsier Tails. (R) **11.30** Celebrity Big Brother: Live Launch. (R) **1.25** **Film: Columbo: A Case of Impunity**. (1975) **4.25** Diagnosis Murder. (R) **5.25** Diagnosis Murder. (R) **6.20** **Mr & Mrs Murder**. New series. Australian detective comedy, starring Shaun Micallef and Kat Stewart. **7.10** **CSI: Crime Scene Investigation**. Two siblings confess to a schoolgirl's murder. (R) **8.00** **NCIS**. The team tries to prove Ziva had nothing to do with a political assassination carried out by her former Mossad partner – but has to tackle the case without Gibbs's guidance. (R) **9.00** **NCIS**. Against his better judgement, Gibbs comes out of retirement to help Fornell and his daughter by reopening the case of an escaped convict who is putting their lives in danger. (R) **9.55** **5 News Weekend**. **10.00** **Celebrity Big Brother**. Highlights of the famous housemates' past 24 hours. **11.00** **Celebrity Big Brother's Bit on the Psych**. New series. Psychological analysis of the housemates' behaviour. **12.00** SuperCasino. **3.05** True CSI. (R) **4.00** Wildlife SOS. (R) **4.25** Make It Big. (R) **4.50** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **5.00** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.10** Han's Helpline. (R) **5.20** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.25** The Funky Valley Show. (R) **5.40** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **5.50** Han's Helpline. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three
7.00 Doctor Who: The Ultimate Guide **8.00** Top Gear **9.00** **Film: Die Hard with a Vengeance** (1995) **11.00** Family Guy
BBC Four
7.00 Nasa – Triumph and Tragedy **8.00** A Very British Murder with Lucy Worsley **9.00** The Bridge **11.00** Rock 'n' Roll Britannia
ITV2
3.20 **Film: Junior** (1994) **5.30** **Film: Beethoven's 2nd** (1993) **7.15** **Film: Mr Bean's Holiday** (2007) **9.00** **Film: The 40 Year Old Virgin** (2005) **11.20** **Film: Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason** (2004)
ITV3
2.50 Housewife, 49 **4.40** Agatha Christie's Marple **6.50** Agatha Christie's Poirot **11.00** Prime Suspect
ITV4
3.10 **Film: Shootout** (1971) **5.05** **Film: The War Wagon** (1967) **7.10** **Film: Police Academy 6: City Under Siege** (1989) **10.00** **Film: Lethal Weapon 2** (1989)
E4
4.25 **Film: Penelope** (2006) **6.10** **Film: Meet Dave** (2008) **8.00** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** **Film: The Waterboy** (1998) **10.50** The Inbetweeners **11.55** 8 Out of 10 Cats
Film4
2.55 Baby's Day Out (1994) **4.45** Garbit (1966) **6.55** Employee of the Month (2006) Comedy, with Dane Cook, Dax Shepard and Jessica Simpson. **9.00** Easy A (2010) A teenage girl lies about her non-existent sexual history, and uses the resulting rumours to become the talk of the school. Teen comedy, with Emma Stone and Penn Badgley. **10.50** Troll Hunter (2010)

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What's On!

Listings supplied by Press Association

SUNDAY'S TV 5.01.14

CHOICE



Dan Snow

Operation Grand Canyon with Dan Snow BBC2, 9pm

For some Karl Pilkington types who might not embrace the glory of nature, the Grand Canyon is just a big rocky hole in the ground. For others it is one of the wonders of the world. Given that camera crews from around the globe spend a chunk of each year filming it, there's little wonder we are occasionally treated to another HD-friendly documentary like this. Here, occasional One Show reporter Dan Snow joins forces with a team of scientists and historians to emulate explorer John Wesley Powell's 1869 expedition.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** The Big Questions. **11.00** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **12.00** Bargain Hunt. **1.00** BBC News: Weather. **1.15** Moving On. (R) **2.00** Escape to the Country. (R) **2.45** Helicopter Heroes. **3.15** That Puppet Game Show. **4.00** Songs of Praise. **4.35** Dolphins - Spy in the Pod. (R) **5.35** BBC News: Regional News; Weather.

6.00 Countryfile. John Craven joins the staff of Killerton House in Devon as they prepare for the year ahead. He also views the home's antique clothing collection and presents items from past shows.

7.00 Celebrity Mastermind. With Fred MacAulay, Mark Billingham, Georgia Henshaw and Charles Collingwood.

7.30 Antiques Roadshow. The experts gather at the home of the Royal Ballet School in Richmond Park, London. Objects include a longbow used in the Second World War and a sketch of Dylan Thomas's wife.

8.30 Sherlock. The brooding detective is kept busy as best man on John and Mary's wedding day - but it soon turns out his duties involve stopping a killer who is stalking the reception.

10.00 BBC News: Regional News; Weather.

10.25 Mrs Brown's Boys New Year Special. The doting mother gets a new house guest - a homeless parrot. (R)

11.05 Film: Good Will Hunting. (1997) Drama, with Matt Damon.

1.05 Weatherview. **1.10** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 This Is BBC Two. **6.10** Film: Odette. (1950) **8.05** Monty Don's French Gardens. (R) **9.05** Countryfile. (R) **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.30** Paul Hollywood's Pies & Puds. (R) **12.15** Paul Hollywood's Pies & Puds. (R) **1.00** Live Darts: BDO World Championships. Coverage of the second day of the tournament. **5.00** Ski Sunday. **5.45** Film: Catch Me If You Can. (2002) Fact-based drama, starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Tom Hanks.

8.00 Nature's Wildest Events. Chris Packham investigates reports of bears turning to a life of crime and fish that have contrived a way to attack birds on land. Last in the series.

9.00 Operation Grand Canyon with Dan Snow. The presenter joins a team of historians and geologists to recreate the pioneering 280-mile journey undertaken around the natural wonder by explorer John Wesley Powell in 1869.

10.00 Charlie Brooker's 2013 Wipe. A satirical look back at the events of the past 12 months, which included the horse-meat scandal, the death of Margaret Thatcher and the US government shutdown. (R)

11.00 Darts: BDO World Championships. Action from the second day at the Lakeside Country Club in Frimley Green, featuring first-round matches in the men's and ladies' competitions.

11.50 Darts Extra. The BDO World Championships. **1.50** Sign Zone: Countryfile. (R) **2.45** Holby City. (R) **3.45** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Pat & Stan. **6.10** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.15** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.25** Dingo Dan. (R) **6.40** Dingo Dan. (R) **6.50** Animals. (R) **6.55** Animals. (R) **7.05** Animals. (R) **7.15** Sooty. (R) **7.25** Sooty. (R) **7.40** Almost Naked Animals. (R) **7.50** Almost Naked Animals. (R) **8.05** Horrid Henry. (R) **8.15** Horrid Henry. (R) **8.30** Victorious. **9.00** Deadtime Stories. (R) **9.25** FA Cup Football Highlights. (R) **10.55** The Unforgettable Leonard Rossiter. (R) **11.25** ITV News: Weather.

11.30 Live FA Cup Football. Nottingham Forest v West Ham United (Kick-off 12.00pm). **2.15** The Cube. (R) **3.15** Splash! (R) **4.45** The Celebrity Chase. With Sally Lindsay, Shaun Williamson, Barry McGuigan and Jenny Frost. (R) **5.45** Regional Programme; Weather.

6.00 ITV News: Weather. **6.15** Dancing on Ice. New series. Past contestants get their skates back on for the final series.

7.45 All Star Family Fortunes. With Kimberley Walsh and Wayne Sleep.

8.30 Dancing on Ice: The Skate Off. New series. A double elimination.

9.00 All New It'll Be Alright on the Night. TV bloopers, with Griff Rhys Jones.

10.00 ITV News at Ten: Weather. **10.15** Birds of a Feather. ITV's revival of the hit BBC sitcom. (R)

10.45 FA Cup Football Highlights. Action from today's third-round matches.

11.45 Premiership Rugby Union. Action from the 12th round of top-flight fixtures.

12.40 The Store. **2.40** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. **4.05** Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.30 Film: Barnyard. (2006) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.15** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** How I Met Your Mother. (R) **1.00** How I Met Your Mother. (R) **1.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **2.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **2.30** The Simpsons. (R) **3.00** The Simpsons. (R) **3.30** Film: Edward Scissorhands. (1990) Tim Burton's fantasy, starring Johnny Depp.

5.35 Channel 4 News. **6.05** Deal or No Deal. High-stakes game show, with Noel Edmonds.

7.00 Shipping Wars. Documentary following delivery firms that cater for the eBay generation, picking up and dropping off a wide range of complicated, seemingly un-shippable loads.

8.00 Speed with Guy Martin. For his second adrenaline-fuelled challenge, the racer tries to set the world record for riding a motorcycle on water, with the help of a Cambridge professor and marine engineers.

9.00 Film: Bad Teacher. (2011) Premiere. A cynical, hard-drinking teacher hopes to seduce a wealthy substitute, making an enemy of a squeaky-clean colleague.

10.50 Rude Tube: Welcome to 2014. Alex Zane welcomes in the New Year with 100 internet clips. (R)

12.55 Film: Waltz with Bashir. (2008) Drama, directed by Ari Folman. **2.30** Coming Up. (R) **3.00** How Not to Get Old. (R) **3.55** Phil Spencer: Secret Agent. (R) **4.50** Deal or No Deal. (R) **5.45** Baking Mad with Eric Lanlard. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Peppa Pig. **6.05** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **6.15** Fifi and the Flowerbuds. (R) **6.25** Bubble Guppies. (R) **6.40** The Mr Men Show. (R) **6.50** Chloe's Closet. (R) **7.05** Roobarb and Custard Too. (R) **7.10** Bananas in Pyjamas. (R) **7.25** Make Way for Noddy. (R) **7.35** Toby's Travelling Circus. (R) **7.45** City of Friends. (R) **8.00** Little Princess. (R) **8.10** The Adventures of Bottle Top Bill and His Best Friend Corky. (R) **8.25** Angelina Ballerina. (R) **8.40** Rupert Bear. (R) **8.55** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.10** Jelly Jamm. (R) **9.30** LazyTown. (R) **10.00** Power Rangers: Super Samurai. (R) **10.35** Sluggers. **11.00** Jungle Babies: Tarsier Tails. (R) **11.30** Celebrity Big Brother. (R) **12.30** Cowboy Builders. (R) **1.30** Film: Grounded. (2006) **3.15** Film: Along Came Polly. (2004) **4.55** Film: Made of Honor. (2008)

6.40 Film: Miss Congeniality 2: Armed and Fabulous. (1992) **4.10** Film: Scooby-Doo 2: Monsters Unleashed. (2004) **6.05** Film: Evan Almighty. (2007) **8.00** You've Been Framed! **9.00** The Magulaf Weekender **10.00** I Am Britney Jean: Britney Spears' Road to Las Vegas **11.50** Film: Forgetting Sarah Marshall. (2008)

6.40 Film: Miss Congeniality 2: Armed and Fabulous. (1992) **4.10** Film: Scooby-Doo 2: Monsters Unleashed. (2004) **6.05** Film: Evan Almighty. (2007) **8.00** You've Been Framed! **9.00** The Magulaf Weekender **10.00** I Am Britney Jean: Britney Spears' Road to Las Vegas **11.50** Film: Forgetting Sarah Marshall. (2008)

5.55 5 News Weekend. **9.00** Celebrity Big Brother. The ups and downs of life in the BB house as friendships and alliances are made, battle lines are drawn and arguments erupt.

10.00 Most Shocking Celebrity Moments 2013. Countdown of the biggest showbusiness stories and scandals of the year. (R)

12.55 SuperCasino. **3.05** True CSI. **4.00** Wildlife SOS. (R) **4.20** Make It Big. (R) **4.50** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **5.05** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.20** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.25** The Funky Valley Show. (R) **5.40** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **5.50** Hana's Helpline. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three **7.00** The Gruffalo **7.30** The Gruffalo's Child **7.55** Film: 101 Dalmatians (1996) **9.30** Russell Howard's Good News **10.00** Film: Starship Troopers (1997) **BBC Four** **7.00** Britain by Bike **7.30** The Return of Colmille **8.30** Apples, Pears and Paint: How to Make a Still Life Painting **10.00** Nigel Slater's Great British Biscuit **11.00** Film: Elena (2011)

ITV2 **2.00** Film: The Mighty Ducks (1992) **4.10** Film: Scooby-Doo 2: Monsters Unleashed (2004) **6.05** Film: Evan Almighty (2007) **8.00** You've Been Framed! **9.00** The Magulaf Weekender **10.00** I Am Britney Jean: Britney Spears' Road to Las Vegas **11.50** Film: Forgetting Sarah Marshall. (2008)

ITV3 **3.15** Agatha Christie's Poirot **9.00** Film: Changeling (2008) Featuring Angelina Jolie **11.50** Cracker **ITV4** **3.05** Film: Shalako (1968) **5.20** Film: The Battle of Midway (1976) **8.00** Premiership Rugby Union **9.00** Film: Universal Soldier: Regeneration (2008) **11.00** Film: The Matrix Reloaded (2003)

E4 **3.50** Rude(ish) Tube **4.45** Film: Grease (1978) **7.00** The Big Bang Theory **8.00** Film: Home Alone 2: Lost in New York (1992) **10.20** The Inbetweeners **11.30** Out of 10 Cats **Film4** **2.55** The Rugrats Movie (1999) **4.30** The Golden Compass (2007) **6.40** Crocodile Dundee II (1988) **8.50** 12 Years a Slave Interview Special **9.00** The Mechanic (2011) **10.50** 48 Hrs (1982)

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What's On!

Film Choices

Monday

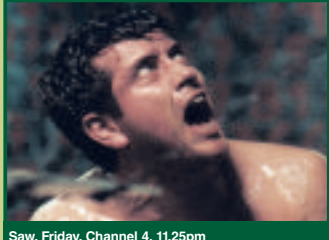
Hellboy II: The Golden Army, ITV, 11.20pm
The demon superhero, aided by a team from the Bureau of Paranormal Research and Defence, leads the fight against renegade elf Prince Nuada who is intent on reawakening an unstoppable robot army. Action fantasy sequel directed by Guillermo del Toro, starring Ron Perlman and Selma Blair. (2008)

Tuesday

Insomnia, BBC1, 11.15pm
A detective is sent to Alaska to investigate a murder during a month when the sun does not set. Sleep deprivation starts to take its toll, and he accidentally shoots his partner dead. He tries to cover it up, but the criminal they were hunting has seen everything and blackmails the cop into helping him escape justice. Thriller directed by Christopher Nolan, starring Al Pacino, Robin Williams and Hilary Swank. (2002)

Wednesday

Mimic, BBC1, 11.50pm
A scientist is shocked to discover a species of cockroach-hunting bug she created years earlier to eradicate a disease has evolved into the perfect killing machine. Horror from director Guillermo del Toro, starring Mira Sorvino, Jeremy Northam, Charles S Dutton and Alexander Goodwin. (1997)



Saw, Friday, Channel 4, 11.25pm

Thursday

Stolen Innocence, Channel 5, 3.15pm
A woman is rushed to hospital after giving birth to a still-born girl, only to be accused by the police of murdering the child. Demanding to see the midwife who was treating her at home, she discovers the woman was an impostor and is certain her baby has been kidnapped. Thriller, starring Gina Philips and Ellie Harvie. (2007)

Friday

Saw, Channel 4, 11.25pm
Detectives hunt a killer who kidnaps his victims and forces them to play sadistic games with life-or-death consequences. Meanwhile, two strangers wake to find themselves chained to pipes in a filthy, derelict bathroom – and at the mercy of the madman. Horror, written by and starring Leigh Whannell, alongside Cary Elwes, Danny Glover and Dina Meyer. (2004)

The Majestic, ITV, 3am

A screenwriter in 1950s America becomes disillusioned with Hollywood when he falls victim to the communist witch-hunts of the era, and heads out for a drive – but a car crash leaves him suffering from amnesia and stranded in a small town, where he's mistakenly identified as a Second World War hero. Frank Darabont's drama, starring Jim Carrey. (2001)

Pick of the Week

Fighting to become the champion of champions

If something's going to end, it may as well go out with a bang, right? Clearly those in charge of **Dancing on Ice, ITV, Sunday, 6.15pm** think that, because this, the last-ever series of the celebrity talent show, will feature the good, the bad and the ugly from the previous eight runs.

So appearing alongside genuinely talented skaters such as reigning champ Beth Tweddle, Ray Quinn, Kyran Bracken, Suzanne Shaw and Sam Attwater will be Joe Pasquale and Todd Carty. Neither of them were voted out first during their series, but they were memorable for perhaps the wrong reasons – Todd Carty in particular.

Co-host Phillip Schofield has suggested that because everyone taking part already has some skating experience, we should see a higher standard this time.

"Human ability means that in past years, some people will concentrate, work harder and get better by the time they get to the series.

"Even if you didn't want it to be that way, there will be someone who will be head and shoulders above the

rest, and you think, does that mean we already have a winner? And that's not always the case, obviously, but with something like this, everyone can already skate."

Hmmm... maybe he's forgotten Carty's spectacular time on the ice – or perhaps he knows something about the former EastEnders that we don't...

Schofield also can't wait to see the professionals in action again too. "I'm often frustrated because you get to see a professional skater, maybe on a commercial break, or a show that they do that's not Dancing on Ice, and you look at the unbelievable ability that they have," he says.

"Then they come on our show, and for the first six weeks, they're pushing somebody around the ice who can't skate, and you never get to see really what they can do. So that might be something new this series, we get to know how good our professionals are a little bit more."

Although you might think that most of the nerves rest with the competitors, Schofield admits that there's a lot of pressure on him and Christine Bleakley to get things right too.

"It's the sort of show you don't want to muck up. I just don't like making mistakes, I never have."

"You want to get it right because as a presenter, you want to seamlessly get people from one place to another without your performance being the thing that distracted them – unless it's something you wanted to distract them with."

Quinn has already been installed as the bookies' favourite to lift the champion of champions trophy, but the aforementioned group of ex-series winners, as well as Bonnie Langford, Zarah Abrahams, Jorgie Porter, David Seaman, Gareth Gates and Gary Lucy, might have something to say about that.

And who will face the disappointment of leaving the show first – something they would probably all prefer to avoid?

At least nobody will have long to wait to find out; the results show is broadcast later in the evening at 8.30pm, when the lowest-scoring celebrities perform crowd-pleasing routines from their original series in a battle for survival.



Phillip Schofield and Christine Bleakley host Dancing on Ice, ITV, 6.15pm

Best of the Rest

Monday

The Bletchley Circle, ITV, 9pm

Anna Maxwell Martin, Rachael Stirling, Sophie Rundle and Julie Graham make a welcome return as the code-breakers-turned-detectives, whose rather homespun yet brain-busting approach to catching criminals make a welcome change to the cerebral cops and forensic experts were used to seeing. Here, their Bletchley Park links come to the fore again when they help former colleague Alice Merren, who's been accused of murdering her former lover, John Richards, after being found standing over his corpse with a smoking gun in her hand. The outcome looks pretty bleak for Alice, until her friends learn that Richards had another woman in his life.

Tuesday

The Taste, Channel 4, 9pm

Okay so television isn't crying out for another cooking competition – we're hardly in short supply, after all. However, given the names attached to this latest effort, it might be worth a shot. Multi award-winning food writer Nigella Lawson is back on telly for the right reasons, and she is joined by critically acclaimed chef Ludo Lefebvre and food maverick Anthony Bourdain in her search to find the best chef who can impress with a single spoonful of food. First thing's first, and the mentors sample the cooking of 25 hopefuls, who range from amateurs to professionals from some of Britain's best restaurants – and with that one spoonful of food, they're fighting for a place on the show.

Wednesday
Waterloo Road, BBC1, 8.30pm

The locals had better watch out as there's a new girl on site, and while she leaves some pupils wide-eyed, she also creates a few problems for the long suffering staff. Gabriella Wark (Naomi Batrick, a veteran of Doctors and recent movie Blood) may be smart, sassy and stunning, but her disruptive behaviour has already led to her being expelled from several schools. And now she has her sights firmly set on attractive new PE teacher Hector (Leon Ockenden), she's clearly not about to become a shy and retiring student just yet. Meanwhile, newlywed Simon (Richard Mylan) kicks off his new Resilience Education scheme, and incurs the wrath of Christine (Laurie Brett).

Thursday

Birds of a Feather, ITV, 8.30pm

Cheerful Cockney molls Sharon (Pauline Quirke) and Tracey (Linda Robson) are back to wring more laughs from Laurence Marks and Maurice Gran's winning formula, this time with the aid of fellow writers Gary Lawson and John Phelps. Sharon now works for Dorien (Lesley Joseph) full-time, while Tracey, as sole breadwinner, is left to pay all the household bills. Dorien offers to dip into her savings for some rent, but gets a rude awakening when

she contacts the bank and discovers all her finances are being used for legal fees. A desperate Sharon and Tracey take Dorien to a car boot sale to raise some much-needed funds, but how much will they get for her beloved designer collection?

Benidorm, ITV, 9pm

Fresh from his guest appearance in The Spa's festive special, ex-Brookside star Philip Olivier pops up here as Jason Gallagher, who turns up at The Solano in the hope of landing a job. Seeing as he's easy on the eye, Joyce offers him a job – which leaves Mateo fuming. Can there really be room for two handsome hunks behind the bar? Mateo might be pleased about receiving a helping hand when Tiger and Michael's get-rich-quick scheme leads to mayhem at the venue, while Clive's mind is preoccupied with his daughter Bianca, who's been seen wandering through Alicante airport in tears.

Friday
Piers Morgan's Life Stories: Mary Berry, ITV, 9pm

Mary Berry can certainly hold her own in the Great British Bake Off kitchen, but we're about to see how she fares under

harsh studio spotlights and on the receiving end of a good Piers Morgan grilling. The 78-year-old food writer and TV presenter is the latest familiar face to sit in the hot seat and take a detailed look back through her life and career. As she opens up to Piers, Mary will be discussing her family life (and talks discipline methods used when her children were growing up), her role in the much-adored Bake Off series, and cooking cow udder pie for her first TV appearance more than 40 years ago.

Italy Unpacked, BBC2, 9pm

Christmas, and all the guilty indulgences that come with it, is over for another year, and our thoughts are finally turning to our summer holiday, so Andrew Graham-Dixon and chef Giorgio Locatelli are embarking on another jaunt around beautiful Italy. They're beginning in Liguria, where the rocky mountains and rugged coastline once inspired English poets of the Romantic era. The pair also visit Genoa before heading on to Cinque Terre (meaning 'five lands') where they hop on a boat to explore the scattered villages. Next up, it's on to Tuscany, before they conclude this leg of the trip with a look around Pistoia, Pisa and Livorno.

The Graham Norton Show, BBC1, 10.35pm

Graham is joined by a quartet of movie stars tonight, headed up by Hollywood heavyweights Robert De Niro and Sylvester Stallone, who talk about their new boxing film Grudge Match. Comic actor Jonah Hill shares his experiences of working with Martin Scorsese on The Wolf of Wall Street.



The Bletchley Circle, Monday, ITV, 9pm

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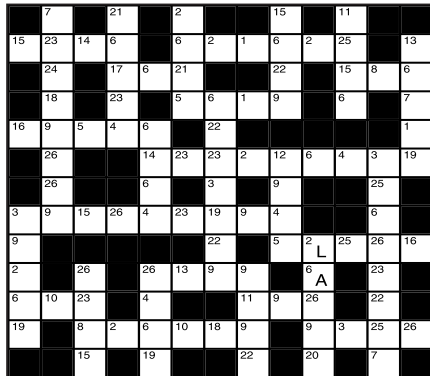
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Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	N	O	H	F	G	D	I	K	C	V	M	L	S
2	W	B	A	Q	E	X	Z	J	T	Y	P	R	U

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

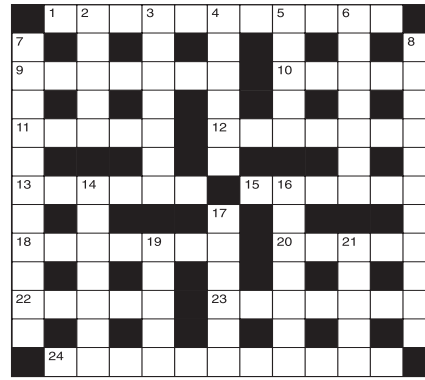
Cryptic Clues:

Across

1. Skilled craftsmen? (11)
2. Dislikes haste, perhaps (5)
3. Money from pirates (7)
4. Enjoy a flavour (6)
5. Presents one's natural talents (5)
6. Ends of routes vary in merit (7)
7. News being made? (11)
8. It records world-shaking events (11)
9. Dark cell (7)
10. Combine (5)
11. Deposit (5)
12. Paid up (7)
13. Strain (6)
14. Disturbance (7)
15. Motive (6)
16. Envelop (7)
17. Come in (5)
18. Felony (5)
19. She's a new member of a union (5)
20. Like a ship taking a number to port (5)
21. Like a ship taking a number to port (5)
22. All right, a sanctimonious creature (5)
23. Terminated the sitting, presumably (5,2)
24. Discerning writer and french sailor (11)

Down

1. Skilled craftsmen? (11)
2. Dislikes haste, perhaps (5)
3. Money from pirates (7)
4. Enjoy a flavour (6)
5. Presents one's natural talents (5)
6. Ends of routes vary in merit (7)
7. News being made? (11)
8. It records world-shaking events (11)
9. Dark cell (7)
10. Combine (5)
11. Deposit (5)
12. Paid up (7)
13. Strain (6)
14. Disturbance (7)
15. Motive (6)
16. Envelop (7)
17. Come in (5)
18. Felony (5)
19. She's a new member of a union (5)
20. Like a ship taking a number to port (5)
21. Like a ship taking a number to port (5)
22. All right, a sanctimonious creature (5)
23. Terminated the sitting, presumably (5,2)
24. Discerning writer and french sailor (11)



Quick Clues:

Across

1. Inconsiderate (11)
2. Dark cell (7)
3. Unavailing (7)
4. Upright (6)
5. Confine (5)
6. Ambles (7)
7. Immaturity (11)
8. Starring part (7,4)
9. Disturbance (7)
10. Put to death (7)
11. Issue (6)
12. Corrupt (5)
13. Reliance (5)

Down

1. Sharpened (5)
2. Unavailing (7)
3. Upright (6)
4. Confine (5)
5. Ambles (7)
6. Immaturity (11)
7. Starring part (7,4)
8. Disturbance (7)
9. Put to death (7)
10. Issue (6)
11. Corrupt (5)
12. Reliance (5)

Sudoku

3		9	7			4		
	2		6		9		5	8
	5		1					6
7			3					9
	1			6			4	
6				4		5		
1					3		9	
5			9		4		2	1
		4			6	5		

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

5	1	7	3	9	6	2	4
2	3	9	6	5	4	7	8
6	4	1	2	7	8	9	5
1	9	7	4	2	3	5	6
4	5	2	8	6	9	1	3
3	6	5	1	7	4	9	2
8	1	6	7	3	6	2	4
5	6	4	1	8	2	3	7
7	2	3	9	4	5	8	1

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
Across: 1 Penelope; 5 Spar; 9 Tsar; 10 Distinct; 11 Cache; 12 Illicit; 13 Dentist's chair; 18 Sea-farer; 19 Toss; 20 Animator; 21 Chair; 22 Night; 23 Skittles. Down: 2 Enslave; 3 Earshot; 4 Pain in the neck; 6 Panacea; 7 Rotator; 8 Italic; 13 Disdain; 14 Nearing; 15 Ice-man; 16 Hatchet; 17 Inspire. QUICK - Across: 1 Contempt; 5 Saff; 9 Alias; 10 Contract; 11 Equal; 12 Imitate; 13 Defectiveness; 18 Ceremony; 19 Eddy; 20 Initial; 21 Offer; 22 Ever; 23 Eyeglass. Down: 2 Oblique; 3 Testate; 4 Provisionally; 6 Emanate; 7 Fitness; 8 Strike; 13 Decline; 14 Furtive; 15 Commit; 16 Needless; 17 Sadness.



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0121 585 6667**Halesowen Office Lettings & Property Management****NEW****WEOLEY CASTLE, Barnes Hill** £975 pcm • Fees
A huge detached house close to Newman University. This property features 2 large reception rooms, modern kitchen, utility area at the back of the garage, 4 big double bedrooms, shower room, separate toilet, huge long garden with a summer house, driveway for 2/3 cars. Benefits also include double glazing and gas central heating. EPC: E**NEW****HALESOWEN, Garland Crescent** £895 pcm • Fees
A stunning, unfurnished detached house in the well sought after location of Hurst Green. This fantastic property features 4 bedrooms, master bedroom with en suite, bathroom with shower, downstairs w.c., lounge, dining room, breakfast kitchen. Benefits also include gas central heating, double glazing, driveway parking, gardens. Lovely views. EPC: C**Rare opportunity! Complete refurbishment!****HALESOWEN, Cherry Orchard Crescent** £750 pcm • Fees
Situated in a sought after location and having been renovated throughout. This property offers an amazing family home. Properties of this size, standard and location are rarely available. Featuring 3 good size bedrooms, a spacious lounge, separate dining room with large patio doors offering views across the garden, a brand new kitchen, new bathroom. EPC: D**NEW****ROWLEY REGIS, Dovey Grove** £700 pcm • Fees
A modern unfurnished 3 storey townhouse, in a convenient position for buses, shops and the M5. Featuring a fitted dining kitchen, 2 reception rooms, utility, downstairs shower room, 4 bedrooms, master bedroom with en-suite, house bathroom, driveway but no use of the garage, gardens, unfurnished. EPC: B**ROWLEY REGIS, Fairbourne Avenue** £675 pcm • Fees
Perfect for a family and close to the M5. A large Mucklow Style detached home which is available now, close to local shops and bus features 2 double bedrooms with fitted wardrobes and 1 large single bedroom, 2 good size lounges, large kitchen, downstairs wc, shower room, gas central heating, new windows, huge rear garden, driveway and garage. EPC: TBC**QUINTON, Grayswood Park Road** £650 pcm • Fees
Characteristic home with good size reception rooms. An unfurnished semi detached house in this very popular residential area. Comprising 2 reception rooms, fitted kitchen, 2 double and 1 single bedrooms, bathroom with shower, separate WC, gas central heating, front & rear gardens, garage & driveway parking. EPC: D**HALESOWEN, Lydate Road** £650 pcm • Fees
Located in the popular area of Howley Grange, this semi-detached house is ideal for Howley Grange Primary School. Briefly featuring 3 bedrooms, kitchen, separate utility area, 2 reception rooms, shower room, double glazing, gas central heating, driveway and garage, small rear garden. EPC: C**STOURBRIDGE, Queensway** £595 pcm • Fees
A really deceptive and extended 3 bedroom property close to local shops and schools. This fantastic home has been fully refurbished, including new central heating, new kitchen, doors and carpets! You really do need to view to appreciate the amount of accommodation on offer; there is even a summer house in the garden! Driveway, fore/rear gardens and available now! EPC: TBC**ROWLEY REGIS, Uplands Avenue** £575 pcm • Fees
A part furnished to suit traditional semi detached house, close to local shops, train station and M5 J2, briefly featuring 2 double bedrooms and 1 single bedroom, through lounge/dining room with feature fireplace, fitted kitchen with appliances, house bathroom with shower. Benefits include gas central heating, double glazing, garage and driveway parking, rear gardens. EPC: D**HALESOWEN, Peckingham Street** £575 pcm • Fees
Wonderfully refurbished with original features maintained. 2 apartments immediately available with fantastic convenience centre of town. Ring us now to view these lovely light, airy flats, one with 2 large bay windows. Each has modern kitchen with new appliances and useful utility room. With 2 double bedrooms and 2 bathrooms these are must see exceptional apartments. EPC: TBC**HALESOWEN, Haden Arch Court** £575 pcm • Fees
Contemporary living in Halesowen. This 1st floor spacious apartment above the archway, within walking distance to Halesowen town centre and buses, the apartment features gas central heating, double glazing, open plan living room, fitted kitchen, 2 double bedrooms, bathroom with separate shower cubicle, allocated parking. EPC: B**HALESOWEN, The Forge** £550 pcm • Fees
An extremely well maintained 2 bedroom semi detached property situated towards the head of a quiet cul de sac and within walking distance to Cradley Heath Train Station. Featuring a great living room, kitchen, 2 bedrooms, bathroom with shower, recently installed double glazing, driveway, gas central heating and easy to maintain rear garden. VIEWING ESSENTIAL. EPC: D**HALESOWEN, Wiltshire Drive** £550 pcm • Fees
Located on the Homer Hill Estate. A well presented semi detached home briefly featuring 3 bedrooms, 2 with fitted wardrobes, spacious lounge, dining room, family bathroom with shower, double glazing, gas central heating, front and rear gardens, unfurnished. EPC: D**CRADLEY HEATH, Harcourt Road** £550 pcm • Fees
Unfurnished 3 bedroom mid-terraced house within walking distance to Old Hill Train Station and local shops. Featuring 2 reception rooms, modern fitted kitchen, large rear garden and off road parking for 2 vehicles. Gas central heating, double glazed throughout. Available immediately. EPC: TBC**AMBLECOTE, Cameo Drive** £525 pcm • Fees
A lovely unfurnished semi detached house set in a quiet cul-de-sac location. Ideal for buses to Kingswinford, Stourbridge and Merry Hill. This house features gas central heating, living room, fitted kitchen with appliances, 2 double bedrooms, bathroom with shower, front and rear gardens, driveway parking. EPC: C**NEW****CRADLEY HEATH, Elbow Street** £495 pcm • Fees
A wonderfully unfurnished or part furnished to suit 2nd floor flat within walking distance to Old Hill shops and train station. This property comprises of a light and airy living room, fitted kitchen with white goods, 2 double bedrooms, and bathroom with shower. Benefits include electric storage heating, communal gardens, allocated parking. EPC: TBC**HALESOWEN, Hope Street** £495 pcm • Fees
A fully refurbished ground floor apartment having spacious lounge, refitted kitchen with integrated electric oven and hob, 2 double bedrooms, refitted bathroom and newly fitted carpets. The apartment has a garage and gardens to front and rear, full double glazing and gas central heating. EPC: D**HALESOWEN, Banners Street** £495 pcm • Fees
A mid terrace property which has been refurbished comprises of 2 double bedrooms, brand new fitted kitchen, 2 reception rooms, white bathroom suite with shower, gas central heating, double glazing, large tiered garden with decking area, on road parking. EPC: E**STOURBRIDGE, Hall Street** £475 pcm • Fees
Located in the sought after area of Oldswinford. A quaint mid-terraced house, close to local shops and transport links featuring 2 double bedrooms, fitted kitchen, downstairs shower room, cosy front lounge, rear sitting room, large rear garden, double glazing, gas central heating, on road parking. EPC: E**NETHERTON, Round Street** £475 pcm • Fees
Set in a quiet road, is this lovely semi-detached home. Featuring gas central heating, living room, fitted kitchen, 1 double and 1 single bedroom, bathroom with shower, rear garden and driveway parking for 2 cars, unfurnished. Popular residential street close to Netherton High Street. EPC: D**ROWLEY REGIS, Winchester Close** £395 pcm • Fees
A very well presented, unfurnished 1st floor apartment, close to the M5 J2. This apartment features 2 bedrooms, fitted kitchen, lounge, double glazing, bathroom with shower, parking space and parking area for visitors, communal gardens. EPC: D**HOME & GARDEN**

Russian roof inspiration and a winter way to dry

IN RUSSIA Christmas arrives on January 7 and Russians celebrate on that day because it is Christ's birthday according to the Gregorian calendar, as recognised by the Russian Orthodox Church.

During the Soviet era Christmas was officially discouraged but since the fall of Communism it has again become a major event and a national holiday since 1992.

Range

Russia has inspired a new range of colourful kitchenalia from Lakeland, called Russian Rooftops, including the impressive **Russian Rooftops Cake Stand (£8.99)** made out of sturdy card.

The range also includes a cotton apron (£15.99), machine washable double oven glove (£11.99), machine washable tea cosy (£15.99) and pack of 60 cupcake cases (£3.49).

Leaving your washing to dry outside at this time of year could result in frozen or persistently damp clothes, and the tumble drier alternative is costly in energy.

Lakeland has an option for busy households looking for another solution with its exclusive **Dry-Soon 3-Tier Tower Airing (£92.99)**.



The Russian Rooftop Cake Stand, part of a new range of colourful kitchenalia



Get the washing dry the easy way this winter with the Dry-Soon 3-Tier Tower Airing

Come rain or shine, this electric-powered airer gets clothes drier quicker.

It costs less than 5p an hour to run and has 21m worth of drying space, or can open to half the size for smaller loads.

It has flat drying surfaces too for delicates and wool-

lens and, despite reaching a height of 54 inches (135cms), is light to handle and can fold to a depth of just three inches (under 8cms).

Great for towels and duvets, this drier means you will no longer have to muffle your radiators during the winter.

See the lakeland.co.uk website, call 015394 88100 or visit one of their shops, which includes branches at the Gracechurch Centre in Sutton Coldfield, Touchwood at Solihull, Shrewsbury and Worcester.

LB

No time to put feet up when soil needs tending



This is the time of year to prepare your fruit and veg patch for the coming growing season

JANUARY may be a quiet time of year in the fruit and vegetable garden, but you can't completely put your feet up and forget about it.

Vegetables

Soil pH (acidity/alkalinity) is one factor that gardeners should know about their soil, as it will determine which plants can be grown successfully.

And yet, there are so many gardeners that don't have a clue about their soil's pH.

So, now's a good time to test it. Soil pH testing kits come in numerous forms and are inexpensive to buy.

While you're testing for pH, go the

whole hog and test the nitrogen, phosphorus and potash levels too.

Having this knowledge may well solve one of those long-term nagging questions about why your plants have been struggling to grow.

Topical tip: Keep clearing away crops as they go over or are harvested. Keeping the veg garden clean and tidy is one way to reduce pest and disease problems later in the year.

Fruit

In cold regions, you may need to provide winter protection for wall-trained figs to help the young figs overwinter to produce next year's crop. Cover with plastic netting and fill between the plant and the netting with

straw, bracken or other open material. This covering should remain on until the danger of frost has passed.

Free-standing and container-grown figs can be covered with horticultural fleece when cold weather and frost is forecast.

Clean up old strawberry beds, removing yellow foliage, old runners and any plants that look as if they are affected by viruses.

Lift and pot up or plant out rooted strawberry runners. These will make new plants to fruit for the next five to six years and are useful replacements for old or diseased plants.

Topical tip: Keep planting new fruit trees, bushes and canes. This is a great time of year to restock the fruit garden.

Motoring

Compiled by Motoring
Editor Sharon Walters

Nissan's latest Qashqai redefining crossover

COMBINING innovation and exciting technology with intelligent design, the new Qashqai will build on the success of its two-million selling predecessor.

Yet despite setting new standards for technology, comfort and practicality, the Qashqai remains accessible to buyers considering a conventional hatchback or crossover. With prices starting from just £17,595, buyers can benefit from premium quality and some of the most advanced features on the market.

Nissan's philosophy of bringing premium features to the family car market is tried and tested. The exceptional success of the original model proves that buyers now expect Nissan to deliver sector-first innovations and fresh thinking in every key area.

The new Qashqai, on sale this month, is available in four familiar grades: Visia, Acenta, Acenta Premium and Tekna.

Visia models, priced from £17,595, come with a range of new features including automatic air conditioning, hill start assist, a five-inch colour HD infotainment screen, chassis control, TPMS (tyre pressure monitoring system) and speed limiter/cruise control all fitted as standard.

Acenta models continue the generous theme with a further list of premium features fitted as standard.

Priced from £19,145, these include dual-zone automatic air conditioning, premium leather steering wheel and gear knob, 17-inch alloy wheels and a luggage board system. Safety equipment includes front fog lamps, auto headlamps and rain-sensing wipers.

Both the Visia and Acenta models come with the option of a smart vision pack (£450) that adds Nissan's advanced safety shield system among other driver aids. Designed to enhance the safety of occupants, the pack incorporates front collision avoidance and traffic sign recognition.

Acenta Premium models start from £20,995 and feature a raft of comfort and safety technologies. These include new-generation NissanConnect infotainment system with DAB radio. A rear view camera is also fitted as standard, along with i-key start push button, parking sensors and a panoramic glass roof. Safety features include front collision avoidance, high beam assist and lane departure warning.

Technologies

Range-topping Tekna models – which start from £23,145 – feature an array of new-to-sector technologies that further highlight Nissan's lead in the crossover market. For safety, Tekna models benefit from Bi-LED headlamps, Safety Shield with Traffic Signal Recognition and High Beam Assist.

Tekna models also excel when it comes to design and technology features. All models are equipped with 19-inch alloy wheels, roof rails, part-leather seats, a large glass roof, heated seats, front and rear parking sensors and Intelligent key with engine start button.

The latest-generation NissanConnect system is also standard, including a seven-inch touchscreen display, DAB digital radio, Around View Monitor and smartphone connectivity.

A range of supremely efficient and refined petrol and diesel engines allows the new Qashqai to exceed the expectations of drivers

no matter which powertrain is chosen. The line-up consists of four engines: two petrol and two diesel, with the option of two- or four-wheel-drive. Customers can also choose between manual and all-new Xtronic automatic transmissions.

Driving through a six-speed manual transmission, the entry-level 1.2 DIG-T delivers 115PS and generates 190Nm of torque. Despite its modest size, the 1.2-litre engine packs a real punch, offering sharper acceleration and greater flexibility than the outgoing 1.6-litre naturally aspirated engine.

Its lower weight and more fuel-efficient operation also mean it is considerably cleaner and more economical than the model it replaces. The 1.2 DIG-T engine emits 129g/km of CO (15g/km less than the outgoing 1.6-litre petrol unit), and has a fuel consumption figure of 50.4mpg.

Like all engines in the new Qashqai range, the 1.2 DIG-T is equipped with start/stop ignition as standard.

Set to join the Qashqai range in autumn 2014, the most powerful petrol engine will be the 1.6 DIG-T engine with 150PS.

With 240Nm of torque on offer, the 1.6 DIG-T delivers impressive low and mid-range pull, with excellent in-gear flexibility. Yet despite its strong performance, the range-topping petrol option retains impressive efficiency. Fuel consumption is 50.4mpg on the EU combined cycle, while CO emissions are 132g/km.

The latest evolution of the award-winning 1.5 dCi 110PS direct injection diesel engine is the cleanest and most fuel-efficient engine ever offered in a Qashqai with CO emissions of just 99g/km and an EU combined fuel consumption figure of just 74.3mpg.

The sixth-generation 1.5-litre dCi unit is smoother, more efficient and more refined than the outgoing engine. Thanks to a substantial re-engineering programme, the 1.5-litre dCi engine offers greater in-gear flexibility thanks to a 20Nm increase in torque.

Advanced

Positioned at the top of the Qashqai's diesel range, the 1.6 dCi 130PS is offered with the option of two- and four-wheel-drive. This unit is one of the most advanced diesel powerplants in its sector, with a number of technical innovations designed to maximise fuel consumption and reduce CO emissions.

In two-wheel-drive manual form, the 1.6 dCi has CO emissions of 115g/km and an EU combined fuel consumption figure of 64.2mpg. The Xtronic automatic version emits 119g/km and returns 61.4mpg, while the four-wheel-drive manual version has figures of 129g/km and 57.6mpg. Redesigned from the ground up, the new Qashqai has been created to meet the demands and expectations of next-generation crossover buyers.



There are sector-first innovations and fresh thinking in key areas of the new Qashqai

Your essential guide to the world of motoring

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Fuel consumption figures for the Honda range in mpg (l/100km): Urban Cycle 23.2 – 70.6 (12.2 - 4.0), Extra Urban 40.4 – 85.6 (7.0 - 3.3), Combined 32.5 – 78.5 (8.7 - 3.6). CO₂ emissions 201 – 94g/km. Fuel consumption figures sourced from official EU-regulated laboratory test results, are provided for comparison purposes and may not reflect real-life driving experience.

Models Shown: Jazz 1.2 i-VTEC S Manual in Milano Red Non-Metallic, Civic 1.4 i-VTEC S Manual in Milano Red Non-Metallic and CR-V 2.0 i-VTEC S Manual 2WD in optional Passion Red Pearl. Terms and Conditions: Nil Advanced Payment offer on Jazz 1.2 i-VTEC S Manual and Civic 1.4 i-VTEC S Manual, £999 Advanced Payment offer on CR-V 2.0 i-VTEC S Manual 2WD. All offers are correct at the time of going to print however Honda (UK) reserves the right to change this offer at any time. Models subject to availability. Written details available on request. The facilities offered are for the hire of goods. The scheme is available to recipients of the Higher Rate Mobility Component of the Disability Living Allowance or War Pensioners Mobility Supplement. To qualify for this offer you must be in receipt of a minimum of 12 months allowance. Valid for applications between 1 January 2014 to 31 March 2014 to Motability Operations Limited (Registered Company No. 1373876), City Gate House, 22 Southwark Bridge Road, London SE1 9HB. Promoter is Honda Motor Europe Limited trading as Honda (UK) at 470 London Road, Slough, Berkshire SL3 8QY. (Registered Company No. 1373876), City Gate House, 22 Southwark Bridge Road, London SE1 9HB. Promoter is Honda Motor Europe Limited trading as Honda (UK) at 470 London Road, Slough, Berkshire SL3 8QY

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Motoring

Shot in arm for electric vehicles from BMW i3

THE i3 is a big deal, not just for BMW but also for the electric car industry.

Boasting an innovative approach to design, construction and its underlying technology, this could be the car to give the electric car market the shot in the arm it needs to make the move from niche to mainstream status.

To date, early adopters have helped drive interest in electric transport. BMW is clearly keen to tap into this buyer demographic; witness the i3's futuristic looks and the car-maker's efforts at community building with a comprehensive smartphone app that can remotely monitor your pride and joy.

The bottom line is a carbon composite shell wrapped in funky-looking panels and room for four inside the radically styled, by current standards, cabin. Wood trim blends well with the car's exposed composite shell and the liberal use of natural fibres for door panels and the top of the fascia.

Thankfully

Still, this window dressing would all be for naught if the i3 failed to deliver the goods in the real world. Thankfully it's not, as the electric BMW offers possibly the most rounded driving and ownership experience to date. Granted, progress is rapid in the electric car sector, but the i3 behaves more, well, car-like than most.

Interestingly, BMW has retained its trademark rear-wheel drive layout for the i3. At a whisker under four metres, it's a genuine compact car, and this is reflected in its agility around town and its Black Cab-rivalling turning circle. The i3's narrow section tyres also play a part, plus they contribute towards the car's slippery aerodynamic properties. With BMW's clean-sheet approach to design comes the ability to place the batteries, a 230kg slab of lithium-ion power,



BMW's i3 has an innovative approach to design, construction and technology

under the car's flat floor. This ensures maximum occupant space in the cabin, a decent size boot and a positive effect on the car's handling. The 170 horsepower electric motor also plays a significant part in the i3's overall performance.

And you can't talk about batteries without covering the practicalities of range. BMW previously conducted detailed research with volunteers and fleets of electric 1 Series and Mini models to observe driver behaviour.

As you'd expect, although the mainly urban journeys were frequent, they were short. With that in mind, a real world range of around 100 miles isn't so bad.

Although different eco-centric driving modes can be selected to maximise driving range, the i3's in-built brake regeneration properties can return a meaningful amount of charge to the battery over the course of a journey. You need to lay off the brake pedal though, as simply easing off the throttle at urban speeds is enough to bring the i3

to a steady yet prompt halt. While that's happening, the i3's battery is getting a small but useful top up. Conversely, lean hard on the throttle and you can experience a 1 Series diesel level of brisk acceleration.

The ability to drive almost exclusively using just one pedal aside, the i3 delivers a surprisingly conventional driving experience.

Largely familiar controls, a lofty driving position, good visibility and a high level of refinement go a long way to justifying the car's premium price tag and ensuring its place within the BMW family.

Of course, the financial aspect of the car should be equally appealing. The absence of road tax and fuel liabilities rank high alongside the ability to charge the car for very little – overnight via a domestic electricity supply, and a matter of hours when connected to a high output wall box or public recharging point.

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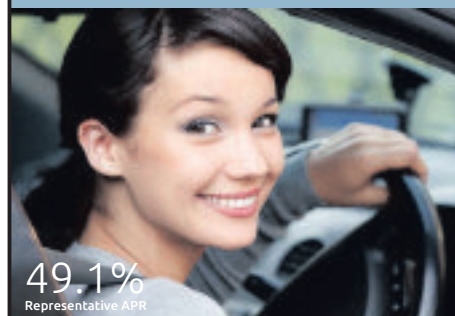
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Friday, December 27	8.30am - 6pm
Saturday, December 28	Closed
Monday, December 30	8.30am - 6pm
New Years Eve, Tuesday 31	8.30am - 2pm
New Years Day, Wednesday 1	Closed
Thursday, January 2	8.30am - 6pm
Friday, January 3	8.30am - 6pm
Saturday, January 4	Closed

Please note that our deadlines will be subject to change considerably over the Christmas period. Please call 01902 317 878 for any further information.

funeral services

BIRMINGHAM ST MARY'S hospice

Birmingham St Mary's Hospice welcomes collections to support our vital work. All donations will help us to care for more local families living with terminal illness. For more information on how to support your hospice, please go to www.birminghamhospice.org.uk or call 0121 472 1191. Reg. charity number: 503456

lost & found

LOST—Black Cockerpool, Molly, chipped, since Saturday, Dec 14, 5.30pm. Lane Green, Codsall. Reward given. 07936 735444.

LOST—Wallet, Kitchen Lane area of Wednesfield, with photos inside, reward given for safe return of the photos. Please phone 07572 482940.

MISSING SINCE NOVEMBER 2 Small, dark, tabby cat, black stripes, 10 years old, microchipped, from Renton Road, Oxley, Wolverhampton, near allotments. Could be wandering on Rake Gate Estate.

If you have any information about her please ring Pat on 01902 567603.

1 Family

consoles, games & accessories

BRAND NEW XBOX 360 unwanted gift. 1 controller, games included. 250 GB, with receipt. £130. 01902 676265.

elderly & disabled

IT'S FREE, IT'S EASY For items up to £250. Online at www.expressandstar.com/bookanad

MOBILITY SCOOTERS from £350 can deliver, servicing available. Call: Powerlink, Blackheath 01384 255019 / 07831 246292.

WREKIN STAIRLIFTS reconditioned lifts from £799. Plus New Lifts. 01952 405397/07897 273617

2 Leisure Time

bikes

CUBA PRO Limited Mountain Bike, excellent condition, medium frame, hardly used, £430 ono. 07775 368780.

car boot sales

Best Every Saturday Bootsale 10am - 1pm
Open 28th & 30th December
A54 Rudge Heath, between Witon & Bridgnorth WVS 7EE
www.bestbootsale.com
07890 267041

what's on

taxi's

5 STAR TAXIS Single fare over the festive season. You Drink We Drive. 01384 232323/252525

markets

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52 WEEKS A YEAR, WHATEVER THE WEATHER!
OVER 150 SHELTERED STALLS
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NO MUD! FREE PARKING!
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CALL DAVE 07907 332065
www.bilstonmarkets.com

caravans wanted

All Caravans Wanted Any Age or Condition
CASH WAITING
Immediate collection
Call Bill on 07760 344 750

sports & leisure

IT'S FREE, IT'S EASY For items up to £250. Online at www.expressandstar.com/bookanad

weddings

function rooms

FREE FUNCTION ROOM Weddings, anniversaries, birthdays. Powerleague 01384 256000 halesowen@powerleague.co.uk

3 Home & Services

furniture

WINTER SALE UPTO 70% OFF STARTS BOXING DAY 10AM
BFC FURNITURE BURN'T TREE, DUDLEY New Factory Outlet

Worcester extra value divan single was £99 NOW £49.50. Double £89.50. Cleo Sofa Bed chd cde in fabric or faux leather was £399 NOW £119

Melissa Cabin Bed, with base cupboards and drawers, blue or pink, quality mattress, was £399 NOW £155

complete divans from £49, ortho mattresses from £99, memory foam mattresses from £99, memory foam and leather sleigh beds, over 1000 mattresses, wing chairs £119, recliner chairs £199, massage and power recliners from £299, complete sofas from £299

Save 50% on all leather corner sofas—normally £499 half price £249.

3 seater wendford fabric sofas—normally £399 clearance £149. Chairs £49. Recliners leather £199. Beds from £49. Mattresses from just £29.

Bunk beds £99.

OPEN 7 DAYS. SUNDAY 10AM-4PM
BFC, Unit 8, Coneygre Rd, Burnt Tree, Dudley DY4 8XP A461

over road from new Tesco, 100 mins past T-junction
0121 557 6885

KING SIZE BED Four months old, Staples spring mattress, four drawers, excellent condition £200. 01384 258781.

RED LEATHER SOFA and swivel chair, modern design, good condition. £170 ono. Telephone 07825 665347.

TWO ITALIAN wall units, 1 large floor to ceiling, 0.5ft wide, £2650 ono, 1 small floor to ceiling, 5ft wide, bow shaped, £2650 ono. 07968 758269.

in your garden

DIAMOND SHEDS & FENCING. Supply & Fit or Supply Only. 01922 441577. www.diamondshed.com

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CALL OUT or 01384 373096

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For all your building needs please ring Wayne on 01384 261236 07973 664738

All TYPES OF BUILDING & roofing work by Davies & Son. No job too small. See us on 'Rated People'. Call 01902 579592 / 07837 994465

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ALL COOKERS FITTED by Bows Universal Domestic Installers. Call 0800 756 2632 or 07973 534527.

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All general plumbing work undertaken. No job too small. Reliable and experienced plumber, free quotes. Call Dave 01384 823863 - 07854 338356

plumbing & heating

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removals

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or 07749 941319

A MAN WITH A VAN Single items, flat/house removals/clearances, local/nationwide. Call Steve 0121 422 2890 or 07815 043724

CALL DEANI Business/Domestic, Deliveries/Relocation/full house 1 item. 07429 453209/01902 830870

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Classified Ads

roofing

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Flat roofs, tiling, roof repairs, fascias and gutters.

01902 238989 or 07580 465449

PREMIER ROOFING New Roofs, Repairs, Facias & Gutters, Call: 0121 532 7801 or 07875 387445.

SEMI RETIRED ROOFER All things roofing, flat roofs/fascias and guttering. 38 years experience. Please call Keith: 07546 158165

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All sizes
All areas covered
Immediate delivery
Competitive prices
Fast and Reliable service
Call: 01384 240956
07920 885774

GRINSELLS SKIP HIRE LTD.
Mini, midi, maxi, large. Screened soil and crushed hardcore for sale. All skips for weekend must be booked by Friday. Call: 0121 555 6060.

4 Pets & Animals

equestrian corner

ALL READERS are advised to check if horses have the required Passport information.

guns & dogs

NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS
Advertisers must ensure that they meet all necessary legal requirements for owning and using guns.

pets corner

NOTICE TO READERS
Please be aware that when purchasing a puppy there are some simple guidelines you can follow to ensure that you are not purchasing from a Puppy Farmer:

1. Try to ensure you visit the puppy whilst it is still with its Mother.
2. Do not arrange to collect a puppy from any other location than that of the breeder.
3. Ensure that you are given any KC documentation, if pedigree. Whilst Midland News Association publications take great care to avoid publication of advertisements from Puppy Farmers we cannot accept any liability should readers purchase from this kind of establishment.

BEAUTIFUL MIX LITTER of 8 chunky Staffy pups. 3 boys, 5 girls, mix of colours and markings. Blue available. 07720 610714.

CHIHUAHUA PUPPIES, good pedigree, vaccinated, also 2 spayed bitches. 0121 453 1354.

FOREST DOG RESCUE
Rehoming - Sheeba - young Husky X, female. Barney - English Bull Terrier X, 8mths. Ivy - Husky X, 2yrs, female. Oscar - Beagle 1yr, male. Foxy - Husky X, 5mths, male. Leo - GHS X, 6mths, male. Sandy - red Staffie, 4yrs, female. Herb - Chihuahua X, 1yr, male. Axel - red Staffie, 2yrs, male. Rex - Boxer X Staffie, 1yr, male. Dodge - X Breed, 2yrs, male.
01299 269181 or 07564 262371 www.forest-dog-rescue.org.uk

GERMAN SHEPHERD PUPPIES, black, males, short haired, KC Reg. 13 weeks, £350, 01746 761279 or 07850 569996

JACK RUSSELL PUPPIES, 8 weeks old, small breed, £150, 01384 78588 or 07508 875377.

KITTENS x 2, both girls, tortoiseshell colouring, £40 each. Telephone 07460 345164.

PERSIAN pedigree Kittens, 14wks, long pale coats, loving pets, fully vaccinated, £250, can keep till after holiday time. 07771 705625.

RAGDOLL/RAGAMUFFIN kittens, companion breeds, also older cats, £250. Deposit secures. 01902 83617, 07436 002562.

STAFFORDSHIRE BULL terrier puppies, boys and girls, full pedigree papers, £125. 07565 661650.

TWO KITTENS FOR SALE, 8 weeks old, 1 white, 1 black and white, £25 each to ensure genuine homes. 07914 452402 or 01384 825518.

TWO PUGS 8 weeks old, 1 black, 1 white, females, full pedigree, £200 each. 07707 106218.

vets

Express & Star

THIS SPACE COULD BE PROMOTING YOUR BUSINESS

Every day our customers get a great response from Classified Advertising.

So could you by calling our friendly experienced Sales Advisors on 01902 319191.

5 Business & Farming

business opportunities

READERS are recommended to take appropriate professional advice before entering any obligations.

6 Property

accommodation to let

NOTICE TO READERS It is an offence under the Accommodation Agencies Act 1953, for an Agency to charge a fee simply for the registration of your requirements and/or supplying particulars of premises to let.

MERRIDALE ROOM to let, £63pw inc. most bills, good spec. Call 07771 195622.

ONE BED flat, near Dudley bus station, own kitchen, bathroom. DSS ok, £330pcm. 07725 525540.

ONE BED fully furnished flat, Brierley Hill, off road parking, DG, CH, £390pcm. 07877 673330.

overseas property

NOTICE TO READERS
Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments.

properties wanted

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7 Jobs

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8 Motoring

cars over £1500

CITROEN CI RHYTHM
2009, 47,000 miles, black, electric windows, full MoT, long tax, no HP or accidents, superb throughout, private sale.
£3,300 ono.
07973 412113.

FORD FOCUS 1.6 Titanium, 3-dr, 55 reg, 62K, tax and MoT May 2014, leather, alloys, CD, Cat D, £2,100 ono. 07730 496811.

FORD KA 1.3 Style, 08 reg, MoT April 14, 45,000 miles, lady owner from new. Good condition and runner. £1,950. 07812 357499.

cars under £1500

BMA *Ext here 25 years!*
CARS UNDER £1000
Full MOTs - Open 7 days a week!
01902 490555 DALE STREET, BILSTON WWW.BMAMOTORS.CO.UK

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Cars, Caravans, Household Goods etc.

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PLUS 6 nights Free if you do not sell!
Includes one week online and your local Chronicles

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ON LINE - www.expressandstar.com/bookanad
IN PERSON - At your local Express & Star office

*SOURCE: Jicreg 01.10.2012. Private advertisers only.

Classified Ads

ADVERTISERS ARE REMINDED
that the Business Advertisements (Disclosure) Order of 1977 requires that advertisements must clearly differentiate between Private and Trade.

CITROEN SAXO DESIRE 1.4, 5Dr, MoT August 2014, very good condition, £955. 07951 376480, Wolverhampton.

NISAN ALMERA 2001, 1.6, petrol, 12 months tax and MoT, good condition, £375. 07908 895829.

PEUGEOT 206 1.1 S, 2004, 49,000 miles, fish, blue, 3dr, full MoT, 3 owners, excellent condition, £995. 07960 400391.

PEUGEOT 206 SW Estate, 2003, 1400cc, petrol, long MoT, tax, 71k miles, £795. 07950 398750.

RENAULT ESPACE
7 seater people carrier, 2002 model, 2.0 auto, fully loaded, pas. EW, AC, CD, DVD, fish, chiller box, twin heaters, long MoT, long tax, mint condition, give away at only, £995.
01922 278508 or 07552 801216.

TOYOTA COROLLA
GS VVTi 1.4, silver, 2000, 46K, tax, MoT, fish by Toyota, in family from new, alloys, e/w e/m, c/l, colour coded bumpers and mirrors, mint condition.
£1,200 ono.
07980 709514.

VAUXHALL Astra Convertible 02, 1.6, 2dr green, 56K, minor damage, otherwise excellent condition, 11 months MoT, £1,450. 07519 035141

VAUXHALL CORSA 1.2, M reg, MoT July 2014, taxed, alloys, £300. 01902 687667, 07966 741259

VAUXHALL ZAFIRA 1.6, black, 4 months tax, 8 months MoT, 100k miles, X reg, £1,000. 07875 470875.

VW GOLF, auto, V5, 2003, 5 door, just serviced and MoT'd, tax, fish, a/c, immaculate in and out, £1,399. 07887 926424.

vehicles wanted

alan reed cars
Used cars wanted for cash. Top prices paid, HP settled. Buyer could call.
01562 711083 / 07831 245313

CROWN MOTORS Guarantee best cash price for unwanted cars/vans. Call 01902 495758 / 07903 549849.

driving tuition

IL

Homer's
Mini, Clio, Corsa, Fiesta, Punto, 207, KA, Fiat 500, Yaris.
10 Hours £591 Five Hours £301
2 Hours £201 All Areas Covered
MALE & FEMALE INSTRUCTORS
MANUAL & AUTOMATIC
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07970 200066 / 01922 780250
01562 870050 / 01384 234954
01543 660120 / 0121 564 0090
01902 500065
www.homersdrivingschool.co.uk

scrap vehicles

OUR ADVERTISERS are reminded that it is an offence under the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 to buy scrap cars/metal for cash.

1st CHOICE
TOP PRICE PAID 4 SCRAP CARS!
VANS! CAMPS! MOT FAILURES!
ANYTHING CONSIDERED
FREE COLLECTION
WITHIN THE HOUR! 7 DAYS
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07977 499516
07895 346811 - 24 hrs

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TOP PRICES PAID FOR ALL SCRAP CARS, VANS, BIKES, CLASSICS
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MONMORE RD. WV1 2TZ

spares & accessories

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MOBILE MECHANICS Service & repairs. Headgasket, clutches and cambelts. 07747 848469.

HAVE YOU CHECKED your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.

9 Local Information

public & legal notices

LEGAL / PUBLIC NOTICES
For convenience you may fax any advertising requirements to Marie Hogg on 01902 713146 or email marie.hogg@expressandstar.co.uk (remember to include a name/contact number for confirmation of receipt)

10 Personals

personal

Angels
The longest established in the Midlands
- Adult Tans - Sexy Lingerie - Erotic Nude Shows - Live & Free Webcam - Webcam WSS 99%
01922 635544

CALL SEXY LOCAL WOMEN for no fees adult fun. Contact 0700 802 3093 for details.

FREE TEXT MESSAGES from women wanting discreet Adult Fun! Call 08444 484021 for full details. Discretion assured!

GENTLEMAN, 52
Is seeking someone special for friendship, maybe more. I like pubs / clubs, cinema, walking. I am a non smoker, with a good sense of humour. Box Number P18984, Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

58 YEAR OLD MALE
Very kind hearted, trustworthy, sincere, easy going and with lots of love to give. WLTM similar female, 45 upwards.
For Friendship / possible long term relationship. Box Number C18987, Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

general

ATTENTION
Appeal to witness of road accident on Friday, June 21, at about 3:30 pm between Range Rover and small blue Citroen, on Waterloo Road/Ring Road lights. (by Novateil). Any details please ring 0844 249 3844. Quoting ref. AKI/1070594.

HIGHWAYS AGENCY

ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 - SECTION 14(1)(A) THE M5 MOTORWAY (JUNCTION 3, QUINTON) (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) ORDER 2013

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Secretary of State for Transport intends to make an Order on the M5 Motorway in the City of Birmingham, to allow bridge expansion joint work to be carried out.

The effect of the Order will be to close the northbound carriageway of the M5 from its junction with the exit slip road to its junction with the entry slip road at Junction 3.

The work will be carried out over twelve nights between 21:00 hours and 06:00 hours and is expected to start on Monday 20 January 2014. The Order will come into force on 17 January 2014.

Vehicles being used for police, fire brigade or ambulance purposes and vehicles being used in connection with the works or by a traffic officer will be exempt from the closure. A diversion route via M5 Junction 3 will be well sign.

For further information, please contact Colin Jackson on 0121 678 8620. Paul Siddall, a Higher Executive Officer in the Highways Agency

MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY JOBSDAY

jobs.expressandstar.com
REAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOU



Here's how to use the dating service ...

To place your own advert call:
0844 887 2293
and follow the simple instructions

Call today!

To reply to members call: **0906 500 3955**
call cost £1.53 per min
Before you dial! Have the adverts 6-digit box number written down and **key-it-in promptly** when asked. Don't forget to leave contact details for replies.

To reply to members by text ...

Simply send **REPLY 26** (leave a space) then enter the six-digit box number given on their advert (leave a space) and then enter your message & send to **80098**, eg: **REPLY 26 123456 hi get in touch...** then send to **80098**

Successfully forwarded messages cost £1.50 per message (Max 160 characters). You must exchange 7 messages each before you can swap contact details. Messages may be moderated for yr safety and security.

Been left a message? Pickup your replies on: **0906 500 3957**
calls cost £1.53 per min
PLUS you can also listen to other members greetings on this number.

THE biggest UK on-line database of 17 million UK REAL users with real E-Mail contact waiting to meet you..

<http://dating.expressandstar.com>

TEXT IN NOW AND CHAT TO LOCAL PEOPLE. SEND: CHAT26 TO : 80098 (T&C'S BELOW)

Women seeking men

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.53 per minute plus network extras. Texts cost £1.50 per message sent.

KIRSTY blonde blue eyed size 12 nurse, enjoys cosy nights, driving, holidays, socialising, WLTm loving male who fun to be with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409259

KATH blonde independent female, employed with OHAC looking for fun and laughter with likeminded nice easy going male, any age. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407955

SAM, 35yrs, own business, sexy, loves dressing up and married, seeks discreet man for casual meetings. Can travel anywhere. ACA. Tel No: 0905 002 1961 Box No: 408297

TRACY slim dark haired beauty, petite, hardworking career, enjoys dancing, nights out, WLTm loving male who can make me laugh for an adult relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409419

SHARON very attractive British black lady, sexy size 6 looking for white male to fall in love with. Beautiful people can be lonely too. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409263

ANNA, busty mature lady seeks no strings discreet meetings with male any age or location. Tel No: 0905 002 1952 Box No: 366019

MID naughty forties female looking fun, thrills and discreet meets, give me a call, you won't be disappointed. Any age with own accommodation. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409109

ANITA very attractive black female, elegant, mature white/Asian man to enjoy uncomplicated relationship with no ties. Any age, pls contact me, I'm very lonely. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408505

SUSIE, seeks fifty shades of grey with guy any age but must be discreet, call and I will explain why. Tel No: 0905 002 1953 Box No: 407321

ABBA girl blonde lookalike, size 16, attractive, bubbly, OHAC, seeking solvent, refined, handsome guy with full head of hair, 5ft 9ins plus, professional and courteous. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409151

NEETA Black beauty, classy, intelligent 21yrs, loves to enjoy life, have lots of fun and be spoilt, give me a call. Any age, looks and status. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409101

HI I'm Jo, first timer, newly divorced perfect size 10, blonde, attractive, tactile and looking to fall in love again. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409089

SUSIE 32yr old nurse who likes cosy nights in with a good bottle of wine and spending quality times with great company, if you feel the same pls get in touch. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408877

BABS 27yrs slender with dark haired passionate Italian who loves to dance, eat out, looking for nice n/s male to spend quality adult time with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407943

BUBBLY 60 plus lady, slim, fair hair, comely in jeans and leather jacket, seeks similar male for friendship etc. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408859

JOANNA 34, in need of tic, winning, dining being treated like the princess I am, looking for sugar daddy, that someone special to love me. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408869

SUE attractive lonely brunette who loves eyes in love, music, WLTm someone sincere to love and get close to, why not give me a call? Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407021



“YOUR local dating experts value **YOUR** opinion ... Share with us your dating success story and be entered into our prize draw to win Marks & Spencers vouchers... call **0844 448 7842**

CHRIS blue eyed blonde single female, lots of interests, loves travel, beach, nights out, looking for mature sincere guy for possible ltr. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407615

ATTRACTION female, young 49, 5ft 7ins, blonde hair, blue eyes, slim, genuine, loyal, easygoing, GSOH, seeks tall, handsome male, 40-50 for fun times, weekends away and happy times, friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406135

LITTLE bit nice and definitely a little bit naughty! Imaginative curvy blonde seeks male for kisses and cuddles. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 363428

62YR old female, widowed, small, slim, attractive, kind, outgoing, likes meals out, dancing, holidays, nights in, seeking professional gent. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 394106

CAROL 36, looking for older experienced gent 50-70yrs for fun times only, discretion assured and expected. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 401853

CURVEY Irish female 35yrs looking for fun, frolics, weekends away and lots of excitement with reliable male, discretion assured. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407603

JANE attractive, seeking male for fun and friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403807

SLIM active lady, 60's, N/S, seeks honest, kind gent, 57-62 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407693

ANNABELLA board attractive 30 something nurse with healing hands for no strings fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407449

SUE 40's female who enjoys evenings in/out looking for someone to have some fun and hopefully get close to, go on, give me a ring. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407019

NICKY loving caring gorgeous fun young lady who loves swimming, dancing and lots more, seeking male for text chats and fun times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407459

BLACK female, 45, seeking older gent, 60 plus who knows how to look after a lady. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407787

PAM 71, feels young, lots to give, socialising, theatre, country walks, charity work, seeking male to share interests with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407851

LOVING caring young 67yr old female, 5ft 2ins, slim size 12, brown hair, likes meals out, GSOH, smoker, seeks slim, smart male with GSOH, 58-62. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 364651

MANDY divorced independent 46yr old single mum, confident, bubbly and social, looking for male companion to share good times and to be there for each other. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407469

NICKY 26 fun single female who has been on her own far too long desperately seeking her Prince Charming, must be tactile and possess the ability to fall in love. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407485

MICHELLE easily going seeks male to cook for and generally spoil rotten in exchange for great companionship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407501

HEATHER larger than life, cuddly build lady, scrubs up pretty well, employed, OHAC, GSOH, looking for good times with willing male, fun times guaranteed. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407307

TRACY 35yr old blonde petite single mum, WLTm tall male for nights out, text chats and hopefully ltr. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407215

LYN slim size 10, 5ft 9ins, attractive with GSOH, OHAC, employed, WLTm genuine guy who is also looking to put some fun back into life. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407195

DEBS 37yr old professional, outgoing, bubbly, seeking genuine man for good times in/out and just see where it leads. Single dad welcome. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407039

BLONDE blue eyed 72yr old widow, GSOH, young at heart, seeks honest, caring gent of similar age for holidays, weekends away and happy times, friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407113

WHERE have all the genuine men gone? Sue single female who enjoys nights in/out, music, seeks sincere male to enjoy good times and get close to. Pls ring. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407025

PAULA 38 single mum with OHAC, attractive blue eyes, size 14, seeking well built male with GSOH and honest/reliable disposition, looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407029

MEDIUM build female, 66, widow, 5ft 11ins, likes walks, reading, holidays, seeks sincere male. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407003

HI I am Linda a lonely petite mature lady looking for nice caring male up to 65yrs who also has lots of love to give for hopeful relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406715

ANITA petite 33yr old tanned, toned sexy size 10 female with very high drive and lots of energy looking for similar man for adult no strings fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406835

CARINA female, likes Indian rock music, concerts, cinema, seeks North Staffs male, 40-55 for friendship/relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406757

LINDA bored housewife wanting to spice things up a bit looking for clean well mannered professional for discreet adult meets. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406705

GOOD looking professional female, 51, enjoys arts, wine/dining, sight seeing, country walks, seeks special male to enjoy great fun with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406765

DONNA 42yrs young separated female who is ready to start dating again, bubbly, attractive, blonde and raring to get going, come on don't keep me waiting! Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406341

SINGLE cuddly female, 5ft 6ins, green eyes, seeks male, 40-50 for fun and more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406015

PAT 67, attractive, likes reading, holidays, seeking female, 65-72 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 405985

SHELLEY 48, 5ft 5ins, brunette, seeking discreet relationship with male 48-52 for friendship/companionship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 405795

MARK 44, 6ft, dark hair, business man, interesting, seeking sporty female for meals out, day trips, country walks etc. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408571

FUN loving male, 5ft 10ins, slim, GSOH, seeks mature female, 50-65 for meals out and daytime relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408185

JIMMY 53 good looking, fit, genuine, honest, very loving and looking for the same in a woman. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397157

JOHN 59, 5ft 8ins, OHAC, GSOH, seeks lady, 46-55, likes meals out and in. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403273

TIM easygoing honest male, discreet, uninhibited, seeks similar non confrontational, aversely attractive, N/S female up to 65. Notts. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 375065

GENT 48, youthful outlook, likes countryside, keep fit, karaoke, seeks soul mate for fun times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408411

MATURE land owner, GSOH, youthful outlook, likes countryside, socialising, history, seeks lady who appreciates good food/conversation with view to relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408417

BROADMINDED 42yr old male, GSOH, caring, loving good personality seeks female for fun friendship, relationship and love. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404623

MATURE male, lonely, no ties, attractive, likes TV, reading, walks, holidays, meals out, seeks attractive, smart female, 65-72 to share simple things in life. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408183

MAURICE Shropshire farmer, 43, seeks farming lady of any age to share the good things in life with view to LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 374021

YOUNG looking 50's male, seeking female for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408177

MALE 58, good looking, placid, seeks honest, loyal, caring female with view to becoming soul mates. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400313

SINGLE male, youthful, serene, seeks similar down to earth non materialistic female to become everlasting soul mates. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407711

CHRIS divorced, 55, smoker, seeks female, 30-45 for lasting relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407715

GENUINE good looking male, 39, WLTm genuine, pretty female, 24-42 for fun and friendship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407753

SHY 60yr old male, seeks genuine female for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407847

GEOFF 60's, tall, seeking nice lady for fun, friendship, relationship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406077

TEXT IN NOW AND CHAT TO LOCAL PEOPLE. SEND: CHAT26 TO : 80098 (T&C'S BELOW)

SINGLE white 40's male, looking for strictly no strings adult fun, any age/race/looks, genuine callers. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409613

LOCAL businessman, seeking special friend for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409585

SAM seeking lovely lady for great times likes sports, good standard of living, looking for some fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409527

ATTRACTIVE male, 48, 5ft 8ins, GSOH, loving, genuine, seeks attractive female, single mum welcome, ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409471

PETE 6ft 11ins, likes body building, kick boxing, seeks female for love and friendship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409451

CHRISTINA 38 very pretty trainee nurse looking for N/S male companionship to enjoy meals/drinks out, leading to more maybe. Age/looks and status unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 405243

BLACK female 32yrs, 38dd, very curvy, sensual and looking for discreet fun with no strings or complications, any age, looks or status. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 405269

MARIA petite curvy brunette, into keep fit, running, beauty, looking for nice genuine tall N/S guy with no ties for fun adult companionship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 405099

SHAZ 33 easygoing voluptuous black female with lovely smile and personality to match, loves music, keeping fit and looking good, WLTm appreciative guy. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404819

WOMAN 55yrs old, N/S, size 14, likes animals, nature, reading, TV, quiet life, seeks man 45-55, N/S for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404447

WIDOW young hearted 70's, N/S, likes reading, concerts, gardening, meals out, WLTm younger gentleman with similar interests. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404177

ELIZABETH 33, curvy attractive blonde, likes walking, socialising, meals out, entertaining, WLTm well educated nice male 50-60's for nice times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403937

SENSUAL cuddly 32yr old professional looking for similar minded discreet male to 40yrs for 1-2-1 fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404023

48YR old attractive female seeking local fun maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403947

BLONDE attractive educated lady 50, young minded, seeks professional tall male, 45-55 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 391818

TINA fun loving single mum who enjoys most things in life, seeking happy guy with GSOH for meals in, dates out, possible romance and adult companionship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403567

CARLA 41, brown hair/eyes, 5ft 2ins, loving, seeking male who likes walks, cinema and romantic meals. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 396127

ATTRACTIVE lady, GSOH, slim, dark hair, 50's, likes walks, films, art, meals out, seeks male with GSOH and similar interests for friendship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399245

BLONDE tanned female, trendy, 46, GSOH, likes walks, pubs, nights in, seeks male. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 384852

Men seeking women

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.53 per minute plus network extras. Texts cost £1.50 per message sent.

TEXT IN NOW AND CHAT TO LOCAL PEOPLE. SEND: CHAT26 TO : 80098 (T&C'S BELOW)

SINGLE white 40's male, looking for strictly no strings adult fun, any age/race/looks, genuine callers. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409613

LOCAL businessman, seeking special friend for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409585

SAM seeking lovely lady for great times likes sports, good standard of living, looking for some fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409527

ATTRACTIVE male, 48, 5ft 8ins, GSOH, loving, genuine, seeks attractive female, single mum welcome, ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409471

PETE 6ft 11ins, likes body building, kick boxing, seeks female for love and friendship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409451



32YR old slim, dark haired, adventurous, creative, likes music, cycling and photography, seeks female for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 352753

JEFF 60's, 6ft 2ins, fit, seeking lady, mid 60-60's for friendship/relationship, nights in/out and good times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407811

ROMANCE wanted in Nuneaton. 5ft 11ins, medium build male, 41, seeking a relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406683

BROADMINDED 67yr old male, fit, active, GSOH, caring, loving, seeks N/S female, open minded, 62-69 for genuine LTR. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407785

MALE 51, seeks lady to spoil and pamper. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 313191

IAN 5ft 10ins, 55, caring, honest, looking for sincere female with good personality, 45-55, enjoy being out, socialising, meals out, friendship, maybe more, must have GSOH. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 382997

MALE 41, honest, caring, seeks female, 48-55 for friendship, maybe more, must have GSOH. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407677

ALAN retired professional, well travelled, pleasant lifestyle, seeks slim, attractive, N/S lady, 48-60 for LTR and romance. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407575

ACTIVE 30yr old slim, dark haired male, enthusiastic, likes keep fit, photography, seeks female, 19-32. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 330009

MALE 46, enjoys romantic walks, meals out, seeks female biker for rides out and touring. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407171

KIND caring gent 41. 5ft 11ins, fit build, WLTm similar lady for friendship, maybe more, likes music, the outdoors and eating out. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404055

JOHN 70's, likes music, nights out, seeks female of similar age. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406879

COLIN 5ft 8ins, dark hair, brown eyes, likes pubs, walks, DVDs, holidays, seeks nice lady for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406677

SINGLE gent 71 young at heart, fit and active, OHAC, seeks similar aged lady for companionship, shared interests and possible ltr. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404643

63YR old gent, N/S, easy going, likes DYS, seeks female, 45-60 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406655

ARE you a black princess? 48yr old sporty white male, 5ft 11ins, likes holidays, cinema, meals out, would like to take you out. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406551

BI male, divorced, own business, generous, fit, 50, seeks male, any nationality, 18-45 for good times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409009

GAY guy 58, Shropshire, seeks male 30-60 for friend, companion or long term relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407819



Jess Varnish's sights are set on being world champion after overcoming injury



Varnish at the Manchester Velodrome. Pictures by Patrick Mulvaney



Varnish celebrating a gold medal with Victoria Pendleton in the team sprint

Bikes, pain and 200 camels

AS an athlete Jess Varnish from Halesowen may be worth her weight in gold but in Marrakesh it seems her price is considerably lower.

"I almost got sold, some guy wanted to buy me for 200 camels," she says. "I think it was because I've got blonde hair. He was going to my mum: 'Is this your daughter?' and mum was like 'yeah' and he replied: 'She should come and live with me for 200 camels.' I was like 'get me out of here now'."

Varnish laughs as she recalls the trip with mum Helen in February, designed to take her mind off the back injury which kept her out for almost six months.

It capped almost 18 months of pain for the Halesowen cyclist following her Olympic disqualification from the team sprint final with Victoria Pendleton in 2012.

The back problem literally added injury to the insult, but silver in the team sprint at the Mexico World Cup with Becky James recently proved her quality.

It added to her team sprint, match sprint, 500m time trial and keirin titles at the National Championships in November – and two bronze medals at the European Championships a month earlier. It allows Varnish to be remarkably philosophical when we meet as the 23-year-old swings her feet over the seat in front of her at the Velodrome in Manchester.

Winning

"The Olympics didn't change me, it doesn't define me being an Olympic champion or winning a medal," says Varnish.

"The injuries probably define me more than the Olympics, because you have to do it on your own."

"Nobody – apart from the people who are really close to you – understands. You have to get on with it yourself."

"I wasn't naive, but I thought nothing bad was ever going to happen. I never thought I'd be restricted with what I could do. It's probably good it's happened, in a way."

"If I got disqualified in the World final I would be gutted, but nothing would ever be as bad as the Olympics. I would be really sad, but I'd get on with it."

"The Olympics is something you've been training for all your life, for this one thing, and then very quickly it's gone."

"It doesn't even mean anything. The injury has put things into perspective. A few months ago I would have been happy going to Mexico just to do anything."

We touch further on the Olympics, but there is little else Varnish can say. She was the only competing member of the British cycling track team not to win a medal in London last summer.

She and Pendleton were disqualified in the team sprint when they were guaranteed silver and would probably have won gold. The nation saw her distraught as Pendleton held her in the Velodrome, the chance of a medal gone, and she has moved on.

There is a World Championship to think about in Febru-

ary in Cali, Colombia, but it's a goal Varnish doubted she would make after such a turbulent year.

A backache on a training camp in Australia in January developed into a more serious problem and left her fearing missing another season. The mundane chores of cleaning and shopping – let alone continuing her career – were put on hold.

And the seriousness of the problem was revealed with a simple sneeze.

"Don't even talk to me about that," she says, still wincing with the memory. "It had been coming on for months. When I was in Australia, I could feel it every day and I just wanted to get home."

"I had an injection and it was an epidural so it had to go into the discs. The needle is long and you go in and out of a scanner when it's in your back. They said: 'That should do it,' but in my mind it was still there. It felt OK, but when you're hurt your body just knows."

"Then one day I was doing a lift in the gym and it just went. I started crying, and I never thought I'd cry in the gym. I thought I'd broken it, I couldn't walk, couldn't bend down or anything."

"And when I got home I sneezed – oh my God! I dropped to the floor in pain – my legs just went."

"Liam (Phillips – Varnish's boyfriend and UCI BMX World Champion) wasn't in the room but I was like 'Liam, what the hell just happened?' My body was out of control; it was bizarre and really scary. Now I've got to sneeze with my mouth open – and just get my germs everywhere. I have to, just because of paranoia."

Varnish had torn the L5/S1 disc in her lower back with fluid leaking out of the disc and surgery or enforced rest were the only options.

She chose rest and only managed to return to concerted training in July, nearly six months after the initial problems.

It was the first injury of her career – give or take a day or two off – and in an honest and vulnerable moment left her questioning a return to the top.

"I wasn't thinking about retiring, but I didn't think I'd be able to come back as before," she says. "Every time I was on the bike it was hurting and I didn't want to do it for the rest of my life with pain. There would be no enjoyment."

"I'd go on my rollers in the morning or on a gym bike

but I couldn't bend over. I'd just be in pain and how was I meant to put power down in this position?"

"The idea of doing a start made me want to cry. Your back is central so everywhere felt awful, I had pain in my legs, everywhere."

"I'd worked so hard to put on muscle and get stronger and more powerful but I came back and everyone was saying I'd wasted away."

"I couldn't do anything to keep the muscle there, I lost 7kg just of muscle."

"It's bizarre because people would think you'd get fat, but I just lost it. I felt awful and weak and thinking: 'How I am ever going to get back to do this?' After the time off I'd come back to the track and train and it would hurt, so they'd just send me home. It was one step forward and two steps back all the time."

Varnish blames the lack of down time after the Games for her injury, believing her body could not cope after the demands of preparing for London 2012.

She had just two weeks off in an attempt to ride herself out of the disappointment but admits, in future, she will ask British Cycling chiefs for more rest.

"We never ever get a break. Looking back I'm really going to push to have that time because if I'd had more time off after the Olympics, I don't think I'd have been injured," she says.

"I came back too early, 100 per cent. I had a couple of weeks off, but I wanted to do it for myself because of what happened at the Games. I wanted to get back into it myself to prove I was still in good shape."

"Your body can't do it at the end of the day – so I ended up having to have five months off. Vicky put a lot of things in perspective and then Chris Hoy got in touch to say that, although things might seem horrible, I was doing the right thing and I would get back into the sport. 'To be encouraged by two people who had been through it all was wonderful.'"

Varnish cracks another smile, joking about her own misfortune. But when it comes to her return, she is focused.



Cycling champion Jess Varnish

China's Lee Wai Sze has built on her bronze in the keirin at London 2012 and team sprint world and Olympic champions, Germany's Kristina Vogel and Miriam Welte – who beat Varnish and James in Mexico – are chief threats. And even though she and James were under China's old world record time set at London 2012, they were still second in Aguascalientes recently.

So does Varnish, who immediately lost the team sprint world record she set with Pendleton at London 2012 to China in the very next race, need to get faster?

"Yep," she says matter-of-factly. "Everyone has got faster, which is great because it shows the sport is going in the right direction."

Her training has changed, incorporating more pilates, as the Worlds and the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow this summer loom. "I don't think it's going to be gone ever," says Varnish, who began track cycling at an early age and was selected to join British Cycling's Olympic Development Programme in 2005, making selection a year ahead of her age group.

"It's always going to be something I'll have to manage – and want to manage. It could come back at any time and I want to keep my body healthy for as long as possible. I'm 23 and hopefully have a long career ahead of me."

"It was such a bad injury; I don't want anything like that again. I'll always be aware of it and I'll always do rehab and pilates."

Frustration

"That's what I've started to do because of my back. I've had to change in the gym, I can't do some lifts which I used to do because of the load on the disc."

There's no frustration now, though, even after watching sprint partner James take gold in the keirin and sprint at the World Track Championships in Minsk in February.

The pair, who grew up together in the British Cycling programme, were in Pendleton's shadow.

But there is no battle to become the sport's new golden girl. "We are really good friends, we've been doing the same training, have pushed ourselves and raced together at the World Cup," says Varnish, who also rides for Team V-Sprint Racing, which was founded by dad Jim, a former National and World Cycle Speedway champion.

"I didn't get the icing on the cake at the Worlds because I was in good shape apart from my back, but Becky got all the rewards from it."

"It wasn't my time. Becky has had her injuries, I was happy it all came together."

Varnish dreams about being world champion and emulating James – the closest she has come was team sprint silver in 2011 – something she thought she would have to put on hold for another year.

But after overcoming her demons, on and off the track, it is a realistic aim in February.

The scars have healed and Varnish is happy to the point where she apologises for talking about things too much. It has been a long road, but something which has left her fearless.

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SPORT

Long road ahead
Cycling ace Jess sets sights
on world championships
Page 35



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Delight for Glassboys in double over rivals

Stourbridge 5 Redditch 1
THE Glassboys completed a league double over their nearest neighbours in the Southern Premier in front of a bumper Boxing Day crowd of 637.

Stourbridge opened the scoring on 17 minutes with a well-crafted move. Kyle Haynes and Luke Benbow played in Ryan Rowe and he was able to tuck away a low shot past Bradley Catlow.

Redditch deservedly levelled with 27 minutes gone. Dean Coleman could only parry a 20-yard drive from Sam Youngs and Omari Sterling-James netted the rebound.

Four minutes before the interval, a howler from Catlow allowed Stourbridge to regain the lead. A corner from Sean Geddes looked to have provided the keeper with a regulation catch, but the ball slipped through his hands and Nathan Bennett was left with an easy header.

The home side gave themselves some breathing space on 79 minutes with a tidy finish by sub Drew Canavan from outside the box into the bottom corner of the net and a minute later Geddes picked out Jordan Fitzpatrick for the fourth.

Stourbridge made it 5-1 as Billingham's right-wing flag-kick was met by Will Richards at the near post and Rowe nodded it home.

Archer hits target twice

Tipton 2 Causeway Utd 2
TWO Jordan Archer goals came within a late equaliser of Tipton taking all three points against Black Country rivals Causeway.

Jack Pearlman's excellently taken equaliser with five minutes to go gave Causeway a share of the spoils but Tipton will know a string of wasted chances in the first half should really have put the game beyond doubt.

After a goalless first half it was Archer who broke the deadlock just two minutes after the interval, bundling home after Marvin Nisbett's shot was parried.

On 68 minutes, Jovan Blake-Walker brought United level. Archer restored the lead on 76 minutes but with time running out slick finishing by Pearlman levelled again.

Tipton followed this up with a 2-0 win at Tividale on Boxing Day, thanks to a Luke Paskin own goal and one from Marvin Nisbett.

Welborn snatches title from Carruthers



Jason Welborn shows off his Midlands title belt. Picture: Rob Ellis-UKO boxing

ROWLEY Regis fighter Jason Welborn produced a great leveller after coming from behind to rip a second Midlands title at two weights from Birmingham's Terry Carruthers.

Welborn, a former area champion at welterweight, replaced his former crown with Carruthers' belt at light middle after blood was shed at the Holiday Inn in Birmingham.

The champion had set a fast pace but was sliced open above both eyes by the eighth round, forcing referee John Keane's

Boxing

intervention 52 seconds into the session.

The fight doubled up as a British title eliminator and Welborn said: "As the rounds went on, I could tell I was hitting and hurting him."

"When I saw the blood, I just kept working on him."

"I stepped it up and I feel it would have really told after another round or two. When he was cut, it was only a matter of time. It's a British eliminator."

That's what I was in there for, not just the Midlands - 2014 will be my year, I am on top of the world now."

On the undercard, Halesowen's Lennox Clarke shut-out Jody Meikle on points.

The two light heavyweights clashed in the evening's opening bout and, by the final bell, the raw but brutal Clarke met an immovable object in the Scunthorpe slugger.

Clarke, who has bypassed the amateur ranks completely, had wiped out everything in his path

on the white-collar circuit, but stayed cool and went with Meikle to record a 40-36 verdict.

Birmingham's Craig Cunningham was 2-1 on knock-downs before rolling over a 39-37 points winner in a four-round middleweight bout against Stoke's Marcus Le Doux.

Fellow Brummie Michael Rooney scored a fourth straight pro win at light welterweight in a four-round points landslide over Kristian Laight, his rival's 180th paid contest.

Perry in boost for Heathens

TOM PERRY handed Cradley Heathens a perfect Christmas gift by securing a return for this year.

Paul Starke, a hero of last season's grand slam team, has also agreed a new deal to spearhead the side.

Max Clegg, the talented 16-year-old Yorkshire racer, is already on board along with Steve Worrall, who was chased by a host of other clubs.

"When I got the call I was happy to be coming back home," said Perry.

"It's a great club for so many reasons and it's nice to be riding on my doorstep again."

Without Perry in their side, the Heathens romped to a clean sweep of National League honours in 2013. But now he is back, Perry has his eyes set on repeating those achievements to earn his own National League winners' medal. He added: "It was a great season for Cradley last year whereas things didn't go right for me at all."

"Hopefully, this time things can be different for me and I can have a good year and the club can carry on winning trophies with me involved."

Starke said, "I'm so pleased to be back."

Colts top after win over Kinver

WITHYMOOR Girls under-16s beat Wyre Forest Phoenix 3-1 for their first group win.

Halas Hawks under-15s went down 6-0 to Sedgley, but Santiago Colts top their league after a 1-0 win over Kinver.

Kewford Eagles West under-9s top their group after they beat clubmates North 9-0.

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MIST FAILS TO HALT HALESOWEN'S WIN

Eastwood Town 0 Halesowen Town 2
HALESOWEN have now won seven league games in a row and are two points clear at the top after making short work of basement boys Eastwood Town.

A game played in swirling fog saw a bizarre incident in the second half when the home side had to change their black-and-white striped kit as the assistant

referee could not make them out in the mist.

By that time the Yeltz were two goals ahead courtesy of an early brace from in-form veteran Iyseden Christie who has now scored four goals in two games.

His first came on only three minutes when Asa Charlton sent a ball forward and Christie, with his back to goal, turned and shot home from just outside the box.

Conditions

Joe Hull then headed over the home defence for Christie to latch onto the ball and slot it home and Halesowen were firmly in control.

The second half was dominated by the conditions, both teams finding it hard to make headway in the foggy conditions.

But a triple substitution in the last 15 minutes almost saw Halesowen increase their lead when first Nigel Penney, then Matthew Martin saw efforts stopped by goalkeeper Daniel Dobie.

The three points however were enough for buoyant Halesowen.

Halesowen 3 Sheffield FC 0
HALESOWEN delivered the perfect festive present with a 10th consecutive home league win sending them top

Halesowen

of the Evo-Stik Division One South table for Christmas.

Shell-shocked Sheffield fell behind to a simple fifth-minute goal when Iyseden Christie nodded Tom Tonks' long throw-in past goalkeeper Scott Thompson.

The visitors created little in front of goal although home goalkeeper Matt Sargeant was well positioned to make a fine blocking save from Richard Stirrup in the 18th minute.

Tonks' long throw-ins proved instrumental in each goal and the Yeltz doubled the lead in the 37th minute when he set Christie free.

Although Thompson saved, Kyle Patterson was on hand to convert the rebound and notch his first goal for the league leaders.

Just before half-time Christie's half-volley was turned away for a corner.

The visitors enjoyed a good start to the second period as Asa Charlton made a 55th-minute clearance.

But the Yeltz continued to look comfortable and Christie wrapped up all three points in the 71st minute. He controlled the ball and stroked home his second goal of the game into the bottom corner after Tonks launched another long throw.

DK still searching for that elusive first win



Ed Parry leads the charge for Stourbridge as they take on neighbours Dudley Kingswinford

Stourbridge 55 DKs 0

THE results and aspirations of these two local rivals could not be more differently defined as the second half of the season, and the reverse fixtures, get under way.

Early season favourites to win the league, Stourbridge currently lie third in the league, while DK are yet to register a league victory and lie bottom of the league.

DK's inexperienced team faced their high flying neighbours and although DK kicked off with a strong wind at their backs it was Stour-

bridge who took first blood with veteran winger Nathan Bressington scoring an unconverted try in the corner.

Undeterred DK stuck at it and upped their game and the following a fine penalty kick to the corner pinned the home team on their own line.

Possessions, however, was lost at the line out and old boy Stefan Shillingford took advantage with an unconverted try.

A third try came when fly half Gary Dipple scored under the posts.

On the half hour the fourth bonus

point try by full back Jarvis followed another lost line out and within a minute DK loose forward Sam Pedley was yellow carded.

The bigger stronger quicker Stourbridge side ran in three more tries within a few minutes, one from Dacres and two more from Bressington, for a 41-0 half-time advantage.

Dacres scored his second try in the corner after 44 minutes, converted by Hearn. DK's dogged defence stood firm, though and only one more converted try was conceded for the rest of the half.

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